

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO RISE UP: MINISTRY FOR
THE AFTEREFFECTS OF DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

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by

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ABSTRACT
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The objective of this ministry model was to create an educational tool to empower survivors of domestic violence and abuse. The context is Few's Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in River Rouge, Michigan. The data triangulation methodology utilized was observation, personal recorded interviews and a focus group. The findings of the project were an attitudinal change, raised self-esteem and an awareness of abuse in their children. The summary conclusion is that churches should provide domestic violence survivors a platform to share their experiences and to provide biblical instruction to assist them in *rising up* from the aftereffects of their abuse.

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Mrs. Betty J. Sturdivant, Mama, I want to thank you for your prayers and words of encouragement. To my children: Demetrius (Poppy) and Kristina (Krissy), who calls me, “Rev. Dr. Mama,” I will love you always. It has been challenging taking this educational journey together. With both of you in college, you made sacrifices for me that I will never forget.

DEDICATION

To all survivors of domestic violence and to the families of those who were not as fortunate to have loved ones that survived.

INTRODUCTION

The title chosen for this ministry project is *Empowering Women to Rise Up: Dealing with the Aftereffects of Domestic Violence and Abuse*. Empowering and rise up were selected for special reasons. To empower means to “inspire somebody with confidence; to give somebody a sense of confidence or self-esteem.”¹ To rise up means to arise; “to become active or vocal; to rise from a quiet, inactive, or subjugated state to become active, vocal, or rebellious.”² These two action words, empowering and rise up, are enemies to a perpetrator of domestic violence when the action is performed by those who have been abused.

The Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board defines domestic violence as “the occurrence of any of the following acts by a person that is not an act of self-defense: causing or attempting to cause physical or mental harm to a family or household member; placing a family or household member in fear of physical or mental harm; causing or attempting to cause a family or household member to engage in involuntary sexual activity by force, threat of force, or duress; and/or engaging in activity toward a family or household member that would cause a reasonable person to feel

¹ *Microsoft Encarta Dictionary Online*, Encarta.MSN.com, s.v. “Empower,” encarta.msn.com/dictionary/_/empower.html, Accessed October 10, 2007.

² *Ibid.*, s.v. “Rise,” Accessed October 10, 2007.

terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested.³

The behavior starts out gradually and then escalates. It can occur in any combination and can last for years. Women involved in heterosexual relationships are usually the victims of domestic violence. Men involved in heterosexual relationships can also be victims. Domestic violence does occur in same sex relationships. For the sake of this project, only heterosexual relationships will be discussed. Domestic violence is not limited to a particular culture, race, religion or socio-economic class.

There is no excuse for domestic violence behavior. It is learned and reinforced:

- through observation
- through experience
- in culture and in society
- in the family
- in communities including schools and peer groups
- in faith, religious, and spiritual institutions
- through our failure to hold batterers accountable for their actions⁴

The statistics regarding domestic violence are alarming. In the United States, nearly one third of women report being abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. Each year, between one and three million women, are physically, sexually, or mentally abused. Over 1700 women are murdered by their intimate partner. The victim and the perpetrator are not the only ones affected. At least 10 million children are exposed to this behavior in their homes. It is unfortunate that 50 percent of men who

³ Department of Human Services, *Michigan Resource Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, MDVPTB's Definition of Domestic Violence*. www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607-124-5460_7261-15005--,00.html. Accessed May 22, 2007

⁴ Ibid., 10.

assault their wives assault their children.⁵ Child abuse has come to the forefront of investigations involving domestic violence.

Domestic violence is all-encompassing in Michigan and across the United States. According to the Michigan Resource Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, nearly 25 percent of surveyed women and 7.6 percent of surveyed men said that they were raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date at some time in their lifetime. Women experience higher rates than men of both fatal and non-fatal violence by an intimate partner. Approximately 4.8 million intimate partner rapes and physical assaults are perpetrated against U.S. women annually compared to approximately 2.9 million intimate partner physical assaults against U.S. men annually.⁶ Seventy-eight percent of stalking victims are women. Eighty one percent of women who were stalked by a current or former husband or cohabiting partner were also physically assaulted by the partner and 31 percent were also sexually assaulted by the same partner.⁷ In 2004, Detroit reported more than 26,000 cases of domestic violence. Every 15 seconds a woman is battered.

The Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board publish a Domestic Violence Homicide Listing. The information is made up of newspaper stories. It is estimated that more than 100 domestic violence related homicides occur each year in Michigan, yet the list contains information on less than half that number, as newspapers do not cover all domestic violence homicides.

⁵ Elaine J. Alpert, Al Miles, and Vickii Coffey, *Responding to Domestic Violence: An Interfaith Guide to Prevention and Intervention* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network, 2005), 12.

⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, *Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence against Women Survey*, April 1998). Pamphlet.

⁷ Ibid.

Domestic violence and abuse is being accepted by teenagers. One out of 10 high school students will experience physical violence from someone they are dating.⁸ Teens often confuse jealousy with love. They lack experience and perspective regarding what a healthy dating relationship can be. Because of their striving for independence, teenagers tend to not want to seek advice from counselors or clergy. When advice is given, the teenager should be reassured that their situation will be handled discreetly.

The aftereffects of domestic violence are long lasting. Unfortunately, the bruises of the psychological abuse last longer than those of the physical. After leaving the relationship, there are some symptoms which the survivors exemplify and must be addressed. Symptoms include but are not limited to the following:

- heart palpitations or breaking into a cold sweat when you see violence on TV
- waking up in a state of panic from dreams of being chased by your abuser
- cleansing obsessively to avoid thinking about the abuse
- not answering the phone because you think it might be your abuser
- not taking pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
- not feeling close to anyone
- not being able to walk down the street without looking around and worrying that you will run into your abuser
- not being able to get more than four or five hours sleep, and not restful sleep at that
- trying to read and finding yourself stuck on the same page for twenty minutes
- yelling at the kids for little things
- feeling guilty that the children witnessed the abuse or are being deprived of their father
- feeling guilty about not having been able to get your partner to change

⁸American Psychological Association, "*Love shouldn't hurt: Teens*" www.apa.org/pi/cyf/teen.pdf. (Accessed October 10, 2007).

- feeling guilty about not having broken off the relationship sooner⁹

In the city of River Rouge, the context for this ministry model, there are no places of refuge for women who are seeking shelter from a domestic violence relationship. There are only two in metro Detroit. There are various women ministries in the area that address the issue of domestic violence. However, there are not enough aggressive programs designed by the church to help these women to overcome the aftereffects.

The ministry focus will be defined in Chapter One. Chapter Two will discuss the state of the art in the ministry model. An analysis of the literature used for the project will be given. Chapter Three lays out the theoretical foundation that includes the biblical, theological, and historical foundations. Chapter Four will show the methodology and the design of the ministry model. Chapter Five explains what happened when the project was implemented and describe how the data was collected and analyzed. The results of the project will also be discussed. Chapter Six gives an account of what happened during the field work. A summation and conclusion will also be given. Finally, suggestions for improvement on the ministry model will be recommended.

⁹ Edward S. Kubany, Mari A. McCaig, and Janet R. Laconsay, *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence, A Workbook for Women* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2004), 1-2.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Area of Ministry and Ministry Focus

The area of ministry for this project is Social Justice and Political Activism. The churches' role is defined as Empowering Women to Rise Up: Ministry for the Aftereffects of Domestic Violence and Abuse. The project's ministry focus for this area of ministry is to empower women to rise and have the ability to walk out of the domestic violence situations. This project will engage the biblical text along with other antiquated and contemporary literature. This literature will help the church and those connected with the church, to fully understand how God has used and uses prophets to 'speak truth to power' in order to assist women who are suffering from the aftereffects of domestic violence. The church must use appropriate and effective influence of political processes and movements to bring about social change.¹

The issue of social justice is at the forefront of the African church. The African church evolved as a response to social needs. During the 18th and 19th Centuries, several churches were formed out of their frustration for a lack of liberation. Some of these newly found churches were the Free African Society, the African Methodist Episcopal, the African Baptist, the Black Baptist, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion. These

¹ Claude Alexander and Ivan Douglas Hicks, *Course Syllabus*, Peer Group Session (Dayton, OH: United Theological Seminary, 2005).

churches were considered to have started the first black freedom movement.² The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, formerly known as the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, was founded 1870. The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (hereafter referred to as the C.M.E.) is the contextual denomination for this project.

The project's ministry focus hopes to empower women and assist them in handling the aftereffects of domestic violence. Domestic violence, (also known as spouse abuse, partner violence, intimate partner violence, battering, and numerous other terms) is a pattern of coercion used by one person to exert power and control over another person in the context of a dating, family or household relationship.³ Domestic violence can either be physical or mental.

The effects of domestic violence can be felt not only by the victim and the perpetrator but it infiltrates the whole community. This crime continues to be misunderstood by society as a problem in relationships. Until recently, domestic violence in the home was considered a private affair between the parties involved. Law enforcement parties did not want to get involved in domestic calls because of the uncertainty of the situation. During the past twenty years, changes have been made by advocates with social justice and political activism. Laws to protect victims along with stiffer penalties and sentences for the perpetrators have also been enacted. In the Old Testament of the Bible, the book of Proverbs states, "When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers."⁴ The researcher of this project found some *joy*

² Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 99.

³ Elaine J. Alpert, Al Miles, and Vickii Coffee, *Responding to Domestic Violence: An Interfaith Guide to Prevention and Intervention* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network) 9.

⁴ Prov. 21:15 New International Version (NIV)

almost twenty years ago. It was at that time that she divorced her husband who had abused her both physically and mentally from the time that they were married in December 1975. The following account is her story.

The Spiritual Autobiography of a Domestic Violence Victim

The researcher is a survivor of 13 years of domestic violence. The following information has led the researcher to the ministry focus that has been chosen for this project. The researcher was born to Christian parents and grew up in a non-violent home. They instilled good morals and values into her life. Both parents were musicians and the gift of musicianship was passed on to the researcher. In 1974, she was awarded a music scholarship to Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi where she majored in voice.

The researcher left Alcorn State University as a sophomore on the dean's list. On December 23, 1975, at the age of 19, she married her high school sweetheart, who was an Army Private, First Class. Shortly thereafter, the couple moved to Fort Benning, Georgia. In February 1976, the researcher's marital bliss ended on the day the researcher prepared to go to a friend's birthday party. It was on this occasion that she received the first sign of physical abuse by her husband in the form of numerous slaps to her face.

Slipping away from God and needing to feel God's presence, the researcher knelt at the side of her bed to pray. Her husband told her to get up off of her knees and so she did; from then on she prayed alone, if at all.

The researcher thought that if she joined in the myriad of parties with her husband and his friends, maybe the violence and abuse would stop. From 1976-1984, she stayed away from God even though there was still a part of her that longed for God.

In 1977, the researcher's husband was assigned a tour of duty in South Korea. She joined him in Korea as a non-government sponsored spouse. This meant that the couple was responsible for travel and residential housing. The music was still in her bones. During the end of this tour of duty in 1978, the researcher visited the army chapel and played the piano, when she thought that no one was listening but God. The Army Chaplain heard her and approached her about playing for the upcoming revival. Although he offered to change the revival date so that she could provide music her husband said, "No!"

The researcher's husband was assigned to Fort Hood, Texas from 1978-1982. After years of marriage and no children, the researcher decided in 1979, to have an infertility work-up. After major surgery, doctors told the couple that they had done all they could. If no conception took place within six months to a year, there was nothing else to be done.

During this period of time, the researcher's father's gospel singing group, in Alabama, recorded an album and sent it to her in Texas. Her husband would wait until they were partying to play the album. As a result, the researcher would have to listen to "Take Time Out for Jesus" and "Look to Jesus" while the party was in full swing. Her husband knew that it aggravated her when he did that. He also knew that the researcher and her father were close. From time to time her husband would make offensive and threatening comments about her family. For years, life was "a walk on pins and needles" for the researcher.

The researcher's husband was re-assigned to South Korea for a second tour of duty. The researcher accompanied her husband and this time the tour was government

sponsored. During this time, the physical and mental abuse heightened during the years from 1982-1984. The researcher was employed as the receptionist for the Army Education Center in Taegu, Korea at Camp Walker.

While the researcher was in Korea, and her husband was away, the American Theater Group held auditions for, *The Sound of Music*. She tried out and received the acting role of Mother Abyss. She was offered the lead but turned it down because she knew that her husband was not going to let her kiss another man, especially a white man. The researcher was awarded best supporting actress for her role as the nun. She felt that once again the hills in her life were alive with *the sound of music*. Although her husband attended one of the productions he failed to exhibit any signs of expressions of approval or disapproval.

At the Army Education Center, the researcher befriended a female co-worker who was Korean. Her father was an Evangelical pastor and she invited the researcher to her church to sing hymns. It did not matter that the researcher could not speak Korean. When she sang, *Amazing Grace*, the expression on the faces of those within the congregation let her know that they understood what she was singing. God's grace kept the researcher holding on to her faith in spite of the domestic violence.

Upon finding out that she was pregnant with their first child, in 1984. However, that did not stop the physical and mental abuse however the parties stopped for the researcher. In the spring of 1984, the army sent the couple back to Fort Hood, Texas. The researcher's husband's mental abuse continued and he constantly accused her of having an affair. He even insinuated that the baby born October 10, 1984, was not his. He began staying away from home on a regular basis. That brought some relief and

anxiety to the researcher.

Fourteen months later, the researcher's second child was born on Christmas Day 1985. Her husband said, "If you got pregnant again, it would be without me." In January, 1986, the husband of the researcher was generally discharged from the army because of his drug abuse. In 1986, the researcher's family returned home to Birmingham, Alabama. His cocaine habit and "the other woman" took him away from the house days at a time. However, the domestic violence continued whenever he returned home.

Up until this time, the researcher failed to seek help or assistance from anyone. Even though she had wandered away from God, she knew that a life time of domestic violence and abuse was not the plan for her life or the lives of her children. The researcher was employed by AmSouth Bank. She also took on a second job at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. The researcher started going back to church and began realizing that God had something better for them.

As the abuse continued, the researcher began calling 911 for help. The police would come to the house but she and her husband would act as if everything was alright. On one of the calls, her husband was taken to jail because the police observed that some kind of altercation had taken place in the house. However the researcher had him released from jail and did not press charges. Today, victims may not drop charges without the consent of the prosecutor's office and it is not that easy to be released because of the strict laws against perpetrators of domestic violence.

Since the researcher really wanted to save her marriage for the sake of her children, she began going with her husband to the Veterans Administration Hospital to

receive counseling for his drug abuse. Because of the counselor's insight he asked the researcher to return for counseling without her husband. Somehow the counselor knew that more than drug abuse was the problem. When the researcher returned and spoke with the counselor, she shared her plight of physical abuse with her husband. He advised her to get out of the relationship before she would be killed. Consequently, in 1989, the researcher and her husband divorced.

In April, 1990, her father died. It was during that same year that the researcher and her mother became musicians for a small Baptist church. The researcher played piano and her mother played the organ.

The divorce and the death of her father left an ominous void in her life. In November of the same year, she remarried her husband. This time there was no violence but the researcher started noticing old tendencies. The atmosphere was tensed as if a storm was brewing. Her husband began staying out overnight. However, one day while her husband was out, the researcher packed her 1984 Maxima and loaded everything she could in the trunk and drove off. He did not know that they were gone until the evening of the following day. Six months into her second marriage, the researcher divorced her husband for the second time.

A pattern of unhealthy relationships set in. Only two years later, the researcher met and married a man 13 years younger than her in February of 1992. During this time, the researcher had to have surgery. Having used all of her sick time and vacation, from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, there was no income for six weeks because her new husband was unemployed. It was not a fighting relationship but it was a mentally abusive relationship. To the researcher's dismay, she discovered that her new husband

had a past life of rape and drugs and he was soon afterwards taken to jail. The researcher divorced her second husband after only six months of marriage due to his sordid life. Because of his past conduct, the judge gladly allowed the researcher to change her last name back to her first husband's last name. This was done so that she and her children would have the same name.

Although the researcher's mother tried to financially support her and her grandchildren, it became impossible for this to continue to happen. The mother said, "Baby, come on home." In August 1992, the researcher and her children moved in with her mother. Her mother nurtured her through prayer and words of encouragement. The researcher's relationship with God is what held her together during the time period of 1976-1992. Their relationship became stronger as the researcher sought God for direction for the lives of both her and her children.

The Call to Ministry

During the years of 1992-1994, the researcher wrote Gospel music and had two selections presented at the Gospel Music Workshop of America as new children's music: *Josiah* and *He Just Might be Your Angel*. Josiah was a young righteous King of Israel. Upon reading the Book of the Law he realized that his righteousness was not good enough. This prompted the researcher to ask, "How can God use me knowing that I am not perfect?" She pondered the question in her heart.

One night in a vision the researcher saw the moon in the sky and a circle of people. She was included in that circle but where she stood indented it, making it imperfect. She felt in her spirit the song, *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*. The moon fell to the earth and burst into bright red blood. When she awakened she was about to become

frightened. Before fear over whelmed her, the Holy Spirit said, “There is only one perfect person who walked this earth and His name is Jesus. The only thing you need to do is keep pressing toward the mark.” Feeling special, the researcher wrote the song, *The Visitor*. The lyrics are as follows:

The Holy Spirit visits me and sets my captive soul free.
 So often times He comes just when I’m not thinking of Him at all.
 But when He comes I surely know it was He, He calls to my remembrance.
 So glad to know He cares for me and takes the time to comfort me.

From time to time I have a thought that lingers on my mind for days.
 The Holy Spirit says to me, my child lean not to your own ways.
 Sometimes when I am fast asleep, He sweetly, gently speaks to me.
 So glad to know He cares for me and takes the time to comfort me.

Wasn’t that so nice of Him to leave a friend that would defend.
 The Comforter was given so that we don’t have to be alone.
 A gift, a gift from God above to keep us safe from hurt and harm.
 The Visitor, my Comforter, he cares for me, so glad to know He cares for me,
 So glad to know He cares for me, and takes the time to comfort me.⁵

The researcher wrote another song entitled, *He Just Might Be Your Angel*. It was inspired by the homeless situation in the city. It grieved the researcher’s heart to pass by them on the way to church. Hebrews 13:2 says to be careful to entertain strangers. Below are some of the lyrics.

Don’t walk away and turn up your nose when a wino asks
 you for a dime.
 Do you turn your head when the homeless ask for bread?
 Then you pretend he’s not even there.
 Be careful, beware for he just might be your angel.

⁵ Janice D. Blackmon, *The Visitor* (Birmingham, AL: Professionals for Christ Ministries and Publications, 1993).

There are those who have entertained them unaware.⁶

During the same time period, the researcher had a mystical experience as she passed the piano at 3:12 A.M. She heard a voice. Everyone was asleep. She could not make out what was said but she was not frightened. The presence of the voice was one of peace and intelligence. The researcher believes that God was letting her know that her talent of music was not to be her primary gift.

A monetary award was given to the researcher by the Gospel Music Workshop of America. She used the money as a deposit on an apartment. Her dreams and visions continued. One night, the researcher was praying in the bedroom. She continued in prayer while walking to the living room. She asked God, "What do you want from me?" After all, she was a musician and lyricist. On the night of October 25, 1994, God told the researcher to preach the word.

Not long after accepting the call to ministry, the researcher asked the Lord to go deep inside of her and pull out anything that would cause a hindrance to her ministry. The Holy Spirit said, "Don't base your life on what you perceive others think of you." In other words, she should not form an opinion based upon what she thought people were thinking and then act upon it. As a pastor, that kind of thinking would have her on a spiritual merry-go-round.

The researcher, along with her mother continued serving as musicians for the Mount Pilgrim Baptist church. Each time the researcher had an experience, she would share it with the pastor of the church. After receiving the call to ministry she approached the pastor. He did not seem too surprised. He had a meeting with his Deacon Board.

⁶ Janice D. Blackmon, *He Just Might Be Your Angel* (Birmingham, AL: Professionals for Christ Ministries and Publications, 1994).

Later her pastor told the researcher that she would not be preaching at the church. She knew nothing else but to continue playing the piano.

The Holy Spirit said to the researcher, "I'm going to send you somewhere that you can better serve." Shortly thereafter, a co-worker of the researcher who worked at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama told her that her church, Southside C.M.E. Church, was looking for a musician. The researcher wanted to leave the Baptist church in the right spirit. She prayed to God as to how to leave it. She was directed to 1 Cor. 2:9 which says, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." The researcher placed this in a letter to be read to the church. It was given to the chairman of the Deacon Board to be read to the congregation. He acted as if he was reading the letter but made up his own explanation.

The researcher left the Baptist church and became minister of music for the Southside C.M.E. Church of Birmingham, Alabama. When she shared with the pastor about her call to preach the gospel, he said, "We must get you off of the piano into the pulpit." The researcher preached her first sermon on March 26, 1995. She received her license April 1, 1995. She was ordained Deacon and Elder in 1997. She was assigned as pastor of the Smith Chapel C.M.E. Church in August of 1997.

She met ministers who were second, third, and fourth generation preachers. She felt like the prophet Amos who did not come from a line of prophets. She was minding her own business and did not come from a family of preachers.

The researcher's great-grand mother, Gertrude, was in her 90's at this time. She shared with the researcher about Ella Christian Martin, who was Gertrude's grand

mother. Ella was a mid-wife and a preacher in the late 1800's and the turn of the century. It was said that she would stand on the street corners in Columbiana, Alabama, declaring God's word. The people in the city did not appreciate her actions and wanted to get rid of her. They decided not to because they had no one else who could "catch the babies." This knowledge gave the researcher a sense of peace and belonging among her peers.

To further understand the C.M.E. church, the researcher enrolled at the Phillips School of Theology at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. One morning while in seminary, she awakened desperately to find Sharon Walls. The researcher sat down with her room mate to see if she knew Sharon Walls. The researcher had a message to give her because in a vision, she had seen an obituary of this woman. The researcher could not see the actual face of Sharon Walls. The only thing that she could depict was her face shape and the contour of her hair.

The researcher went on a frantic search for this woman because she felt as though she needed to warn Sharon. Students and faculty were asked if they knew Sharon Walls. No one seemed to know her. This bothered the researcher tremendously because in the past, she had dreams and visions wherein they came to fruition. She felt in her spirit that she should not let this *thing* rest because she wanted to prevent a death or something terrible from happening.

One day the researcher was listening to some inspirational tapes. She heard the minister say, "There comes a time in our lives when we must share the walls that we have built." Immediately, a spiritual light bulb came on. Sharon's image flashed before the researcher's eyes and she realized that Sharon was not a stranger. The contour of her hair was just as the researcher had worn hers in the 70's and 80's during those times of

domestic violence and abuse. The researcher was Sharon.

As the Holy Spirit dealt with the researcher, she realized that it was during that period that she had built up walls to protect herself against hurt, fear, and rejection. In order for her to be free to serve as God wanted her to, she had to share the walls. The researcher needed to talk about and deal with the unresolved issues in her life. She had learned to suppress her feelings by hiding them behind walls, which could not be penetrated.

In their book *Boundaries*, Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend state, “Boundaries are supposed to be able to ‘breathe,’ to be like fences with a gate that can let the good in and the bad out. Individuals with walls for boundaries can let in neither bad nor good. No one touches them.”⁷ The researcher believes that if people do not share their domestic violence experiences, they will build walls which will be hard to penetrate.

In *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence: A Workbook for Women*, the authors reveal, “A survivor may suffer aftereffects of having been physically and mentally abused.”⁸ Abnormal behavior may manifest when a survivor of domestic violence does not adequately deal with her experience. She is therefore left alone with trying to understand what happened to her. It is unhealthy for her to be left alone because emotionally she has been traumatized. It is the researcher’s belief that more ministries need to be created that will give survivors of domestic violence a platform on which they can share their experiences.

As the researcher views political activism and social justice, she is reminded of

⁷ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 52.

⁸ Edward S. Kubany, Mari A. McCaig, and Jante R. Laconsay, *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence; A Workbook for Women* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc. 2004), 1.

her own plight. Abuse, whether physical or mental is unacceptable. The desire of the researcher is to see that more attention is given to the survivors of domestic violence. She hopes that the completion of her project at United Theological Seminary will help to create a model of ministry that will empower those who have been used, and abused.

The Context

The context which will address the ministry focus is Few's Memorial C.M.E Church, located in the city of River Rouge, Michigan, where the researcher serves as pastor. She came to the church in August, 2004. It is located southwest of Detroit.

The population of River Rouge has declined for the last 20 years according to the census of 1990 and 2000.⁹ The majority of its 9,917 residents are above the age of 35 years old. Only 38% of the population has a high school diploma. Associate and Bachelor degrees are held by 4%. Graduate or professional degrees are held by 2%.¹⁰

The church is approximately 70% female and 30% male. Most of the members of the church no longer live in River Rouge. They continue to attend because it is a family church. Few's Memorial is located in the northern corner of River Rouge's 2.42 square miles. There is nothing that happens in the community that the church does not know about and vice versa.

When the researcher shared the project with the congregation, the response was remarkable. It was as if she had opened *Pandora's Box*. So many women, both young and old, began sharing their experiences. The researcher got the impression that many of

⁹ Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, *Community Profile for River Rouge*, SEMCOG, 2006, Available at www.semco.org/cgi-bin/comprof/profiles.cfm. Internet; Accessed 8 May 2003.

¹⁰ Ibid.

the women were just waiting for an opportunity to express their feelings and emotions. Since the inception of the project, they have been referring the researcher to their daughters, sisters, cousins, nieces, and other victims of domestic violence for counseling.

Housing projects occupy quite a bit of space in River Rouge. Many of the occupants are single women with children. Some of these women are high school dropouts or have a minimal educational background. Many of them are in unhealthy relationships. They endure domestic violence and abuse on a daily basis. This behavior is then exposed to their children. The researcher's ministry will be a great asset to this community.

The Director of Housing for River Rouge wants to build a women's shelter. Both she and the researcher think that it is a profitable idea for the community. However, because of time constraints and the limitations of this project, the idea of a shelter will be a future endeavor to be discussed in Chapter Six.

Historical Sketch

Fews Memorial was founded in 1919 by the late Rev. L.K. Fews, Sr. He thought it was necessary to establish a C.M.E. Church in River Rouge, Michigan. Rev. Fews, along with his wife Nora and family organized the Alpha and Omega C.M.E. Church on the front porch of their home at 436 Lenoir Street in River Rouge. Later Rev. Fews became ill and Rev. William Crain, the pastor of the St. James C.M.E. Church was asked to help complete the organization. Rev. Crain was unable to attend the Annual Conference. Although Rev. N.C. Hall submitted the name of the new church to the conference, however, Rev. Fews died two year later.

The 1921 Annual Conference voted to honor the memory of Rev. Fews by

changing the name of the church from Alpha and Omega to the Fews Memorial C.M.E. Church. Rev. John D. Crisp was appointed as the pastor in 1922. During his leadership, he paid off the church and built a parsonage as the membership increased. The church was destroyed by fire under the leadership of Rev. R.F. Fullwood, in 1927. In the fall of that year, a basement was erected at 481 Palmerston Street so that worship services would continue.

Fews Memorial had several pastors from the years of 1928–1934. In 1935, when Rev. A.L. Turner became pastor, the church paid for a new structure and started a building fund. When Rev. Turner left the church in 1936 to become an evangelist, Mrs. Precious Irvin served as interim pastor until the Annual Conference. Leadership turnover was frequent from 1937 until 1945.

Tremendous growth took place during the administration of Rev. David E. Fullwood, Sr. from 1945 until 1957. Under his dynamic leadership, major construction began, which included an auditorium. On the first Sunday in November of 1951, Fews Memorial experienced another fire but reconstruction was completed one year later. In 1956, the church purchased an organ, a new parsonage, its first typewriter.

Rev. J.W. Bonner was appointed as pastor from 1957–1961. He formed the J.W. Bonner Club which served as the pastor's auxiliary. Rev. Bonner led the church in education through the Sunday school and the Christian Youth Fellowship. The youth received leadership training which taught them how to conduct the Christian Youth Fellowship meetings. During his leadership, the church purchased pulpit furniture and the aisles and the pulpit were re-carpeted.

Fews Memorial experienced remarkable growth under the leadership of Rev. P.

Clifford Campbell, Sr. during the years of 1961–1969. He emphasized academic achievement as the youth were shown how both spiritual nurture and education can be used to help humankind. The indebtedness was again paid in full and a new building fund was established. After hiring an architect, to draw up blue prints for a new edifice, groundbreaking services were held in 1969.

Rev. Joseph Bouknight was appointed in 1969 and served until 1970. He encouraged the church to move harmoniously and peaceably through the building process. In 1970, under the leadership of Rev. James W. Jenkins, the new building was completed and dedication services were held November 21, 1971. This is the building in which Few's Memorial presently worships.

In 1973, Rev. W. H. Crenshaw was assigned as pastor. He was instrumental in helping the church purchase a parsonage in the New Palmerston Courts, which is the residence of the researcher. The first church van was purchased during Rev. Crenshaw's administration.

In 1981, Rev. Joe Louis Farrar was assigned as pastor. He served until 1987. He led the church in paying off the mortgages on the church building, the parsonage and the van. A mortgage burning ceremony was held with the assistance of the River Rouge Fire Department and fireman John L. Soares, who served on the Trustee Board. After paying off these debts, \$29,000 was still held in the church's general fund.

In 1987, under the leadership of Rev. W. H. Haynes, the church hosted the Annual Conference. Few's Memorial was commended by the Bishop for its hospitality. Rev. Haynes was followed by Rev. Lonnie Flowers and Rev. Eugene A. Woodson. Rev. Woodson served from 1995–2004. The church purchased a new air conditioning unit and

sound system.¹¹

In 2004, the researcher, Rev. Janice D. Blackmon, was assigned as pastor. She is currently serving as the first ordained female pastor. Her charismatic leadership style touches every generation within the church and community. During the worship services, Rev. Blackmon conducts the Children's Happy Hour. This is a time for the pastor to interact with children and youth from the ages of 1–16. They are allowed to express their ideas concerning the subject of the day and to recite scripture. The church has partnered with the elementary schools in River Rouge. It makes sure that the schools have the basic necessities (i.e., underwear for children who have accidents at school).

The department entitled, Ministry to Men has been implemented. This ministry affords men the opportunity to communicate with one another on issues that they face. The Arise and Walk Women's Conference has been held since the first year of Rev. Blackmon's arrival. This is a three day event addressing the needs of women. Physical therapy and podiatry services are offered on a weekly basis for Medicare recipients. The van ministry has been revitalized which is attributed to the phenomenal growth in the Sunday School Department. An active Cub Scout troop meets every week.

Large financial contributions have been made to the church under Rev. Blackmon's leadership. The church has purchased a color copier, new computers for both the secretary and pastor's offices, a new sound system with CD recording capability and new lighting fixtures with motion detectors.

Contribution to the Ministry Project

¹¹ *The History of Fews Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, 87th Church Anniversary: Program Booklet* (River Rouge, MI: Fews Memorial, 2006).

From its beginning in 1870, the C.M.E. Church desired to preach good news, teach divine truth and heal the brokenness of life by the power of God in Jesus Christ.

The Social Creed in The Book of Discipline of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church 2002 states:

The concern of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church for the social well-being of humankind springs from the act of God in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Gospel, and from the life and witness of John Wesley and other fathers of Methodism who ministered to the physical, intellectual, and social needs of the people to whom they preached the gospel of personal redemption.

The interest and activity of the C.M.E. Church in the improvement of the human condition parallels the very history of our Church. In the opening editorial of the Gospel Trumpet published in 1897, Bishop Lucius Holsey stated that its purpose would be to “discuss without hesitation, any phase of the civic, social, and those economic and political questions that may affect the well-being of the Church and race.” This policy of active participation in the solution of social problems has not been restricted to literary and journalistic endeavor. It can be seen in the individual contribution of some of the leaders of our church during its history – Lucius H. Holsey, Isaac Lane, C.H. Phillips, Randall A. Carter, J.A. Hamlett, J.A. Bray, J.A. Martin, and Channing H. Tobias. It can be seen in those official programs and practices on the local, regional and national levels that were designed to eradicate crime, disease, ignorance, poverty and racial injustice. It has been demonstrated by unknown thousands who are members of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church as they have resisted oppression and pursued liberty and justice for all humankind.¹²

Fews Memorial C.M.E. Church is centrally located in River Rouge. The ongoing programs have been successful because of the accessibility of the church. The congregation is known for its willingness to love, nurture and shares its resources with the community. The building is equipped with several private classrooms. The church aligns itself with the mission of the C.M.E. Church. A ministry involving domestic

¹² William E. George, *The Book of Discipline of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church 2006* (Memphis, TN: C.M.E. Publishing House, 2006), 28.

violence is in accordance with that mission.

The Synergy

There are several questions which may be asked when one thinks of the synergy for this research project. Being a survivor of 13 years of domestic violence and abuse, what can the researcher gain to improve her own quality of life? How can the context be intentional in its mission and ministry in reference to the aftereffects of domestic violence and abuse? In terms of the context, how can the project be used as a launching pad to bring about awareness and transformation for those who are affected by domestic violence and abuse? How do the context and the researcher merge to liberate, emancipate and empower women, along with others who are associated with them?

This ministry model will serve as a pilot for helping women who are dealing with the trauma or aftereffects of domestic violence and abuse. Being immersed in the project, the researcher's quality of life will be affected. During the research process, it has been discovered that several ministry models have been created to help the victims who are currently in an abusive relationship or just coming out of one. There are very few models designed to help women deal with the effects that occur years after the actual abuse. The ministry model will use the biblical text in hopes of transforming this unique group of women. As a result of using the word of God, *healing* is the desired result. The project hopes to create an educational model for promoting wholeness and growth for this hurting group of women.

There is a need for transitional housing, a place where women can go temporarily until housing is available. There is no such housing in the city. River Rouge is located in Wayne County. It was reported at a community breakfast that there is only one women's

organization within the faith based community where they can receive physical and emotional help from domestic violence. That organization is not located in the “Down River” community, an area along the Detroit River, where River Rouge lies.

Many vacant buildings line one of the main streets in the city. One of them can be purchased for transitional housing. There is a question as to zoning. The researcher is in the process of investigating that aspect. The church also owns a vacant lot and next to it is a smaller lot with a house on it that may be for sale.

Because the researcher is a survivor of domestic violence gives her an understanding of being a victim. She would like to take these experiences and use them to the glory of God. The passion that she has for deliverance from situations that can bind an individual physically, emotionally, and spiritually is very strong.

There are many writers who also have a passion for empowerment and liberation for those women who are no longer victims but who are now survivors of domestic violence. During the research for this ministry project the researcher discovered some of those writings. Along with empowerment and liberation there are writers who want to educate pastors and ministry leaders of a variety of faith groups.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

There are a myriad of resources such as books, articles, essays, videos, audio recordings, and other resources on the subject of domestic violence. This ministry model deals with the aftereffect or the trauma of domestic violence. Although many writers have addressed the issue of abuse from a wide perspective, the researcher discovered that the subject of the *aftereffects of domestic violence* is new territory for writers. Thus, it was the hope of the researcher to enter into that new territory. Material that was available was viewed but the more the researcher investigated she realized the need to look at the phenomenon of domestic violence and the need for the church to get involved in assisting victims.

She realized it was essential for pastors and other ministry leaders to obtain an understanding about domestic violence. In Rev. Al Miles' a book entitled, *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know*, he interviewed 158 Catholic and Protestant Clergy, 52 survivors, 26 professionals who are working in a number of specialized areas of domestic violence and 21 former batterers. "The old folk adage 'Forgive and forget' has unfortunately been quoted time and again by clergy people and others to victims of domestic violence. The saying has brought added consternation to victims struggling with forgiveness...One of the things we do in our program is try to help people who want

to forgive to understand that it's natural to recall the hurt. It's not unforgiveness just because they remember."¹

Not only should pastors and leaders know about domestic violence but Christians should know as well. Rev. Miles has a second book entitled, *Violence in Families: What Every Christian Needs to Know*. The foreword was written by Rev. Dr. Marie Fortune of The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence of Seattle, Washington. She says, "Our job as faithful Christians in response to domestic violence is threefold: We must help a victim of violence be safe; we must help to hold the abuser accountable, legally and otherwise; and we must support the restoration of a relationship based on two conditions; the goals of safety and accountability must be accomplished and the battered woman must freely choose to attempt to heal the relationship, trusting that she is safe and that her abuser has truly repented."²

Overcoming Violence: The Challenge to the Churches in All Places written by Margot Kassmann, is a publication by the World Council of Churches. This book is an ecumenical discussion on violence, including domestic violence throughout the world. The Council concluded that, "Evidence from many studies confirms that the churches' reluctance to face this issue. Few church leaders see domestic violence against women as a major question to theology, a threat to the very being of the church; and some male church leaders still legitimize it. Yet more and more Christians are coming to see that the

¹ Al Miles, *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 140-141.

² Al Miles, *Violence in Families: What Every Christian Needs to Know* (Minneapolis, MN, Augsburg Books, 2002), 14-15.

churches are called to be at the forefront of the movement against violence against women and children.”³

Although written almost ten years ago, Marie M. Fortune’s *Keeping the Faith: Guidance for Christian Women Facing Abuse* is still a helpful tool for abused women and those who are taking care of them. In her book, the author states, “Survivors of domestic violence have to learn to trust again especially when it comes to dating. I don’t feel very trusting anymore, especially of men. I am really hesitant to start dating again. One man I dated for a while yelled at me during an argument and I wouldn’t see him again. Maybe I’m being silly or too particular.”⁴ Fortune advises that the woman is not being silly but is protecting herself by trusting her instincts.

Refuge from Abuse: Healing and Hope for Abused Christian Women is written by Nancy Nason-Clark and Catherine Clark Kroeger. This book addresses some of the thoughts and fears that the victim and the survivor of domestic violence may have. “When is it safe to let someone know that you are frightened? Whom should you tell? What kind of response can you expect? Will there be enough resources to help you? What can – and do- churches and their leaders offer to victimized women and their families when violence in the family is revealed?”⁵ Nason-Clark and Kroeger adequately prepare the survivor of abuse for the long journey of hope and wholeness.

³ Margot Kassman, *Overcoming Violence: The Challenge to the Churches in All Place* (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 1998), 45.

⁴ Marie M. Fortune, *Keeping the Faith: Guidance for Christian Women Facing Abuse* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1987), 49.

⁵ Nancy Nason-Clark and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *Refuge from Abuse: Healing and Hope for Abused Christian Women* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 30-31.

Kenneth Boa's book, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* is a comprehensive approach to the spiritual life. This book can be used by leaders who want to bring about awareness for those who are suffering from a poor self-image. "By loving God completely, we discover who and whose we are as we come to see ourselves as God sees us."⁶

Boundaries: When to Say Yes When to Say No to Take Control of Your Life, is an insightful book on how to take responsibility for one's life. The boundaries for survivors of domestic violence have been violated physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. "Victims of physical and sexual abuse often have a poor sense of boundaries. . . As a result, they have difficulty establishing boundaries later in life."⁷ Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend's book serves to help individuals re-establish the boundaries that have been taken away.

Edward P. Wimberly's, *Recalling Our Own Stories: Spiritual Renewal for Religious Caregivers* instructs leaders on how to take care of themselves and others. The chapters which included information about self-esteem cause one to really examine oneself as he or she does ministry. "Self-esteem affects how we feel about ourselves, particularly our feeling of being valued, loved, and cared for."⁸

In Jeanne Roberts' *I Cry God! Hope and Healing for Survivors of Child Abuse*, the author, a survivor of child abuse provides readers with numerous accounts of her road to healing by way of prose and poetry. The author states, "At some point in the life of

⁶ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 11.

⁷ Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, *Boundaries: When to Say Yes When to Say No To Take Control of Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 34.

⁸ Edward P. Wimberly, *Recalling Our Own Stories: Spiritual Renewal for Religious Caregivers* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 60.

survivors of violence, whether child abuse or domestic they must make choices as to their future. I could blame God for all the abuse, because it was endless, and I was in my fifties still struggling. Yet from the time I was a child I made choices. I didn't see it then, but I do now. I made the choice to believe in God, to believe He was real. I made the choice to believe in myself and to do what I knew I had to do to survive.”⁹

In *Counseling for Family Violence and Abuse*, Grant L. Martin provided an historical view of domestic violence. Martin examined the history of wife beating from the biblical era until the early twentieth century. “Throughout much of history, male violence toward women and children has been socially, legally, and religiously endorsed. For countless generations the man was not just the head of the household, he *was* the household.”¹⁰

Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror by Judith Herman addressed the issue of the aftereffects of domestic violence from a psychological perspective. “These survivors recognize a political and religious dimension in their misfortune and discover that they can transform the meaning of their personal tragedy by making it the basis for social action. While there is no way to compensate for an atrocity there is a way to transcend it, by making it a gift to others. The trauma is redeemed only when it becomes the source of a survivor mission.”¹¹

⁹ Jeanne Roberts, *I Cry God! Hope and Healing for Survivors of Childhood Abuse* (Oak Harbor, WA: Xlibris Corporation, 2003), 237.

¹⁰ Grant L. Martin, *Counseling for Family Violence and Abuse* (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1987), 22.

¹¹ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 207.

Susan Brewster's *To Be an Anchor in the Storm: A Guide for Families and Friends of Abuse Women* was designed to help those who want to assist women who are in a domestic violence relationship. Society has preconceived notions about those who are involved in abusive relationships. Brewster deals with some of those notions and states, "They are stupid for staying, they can leave anytime they want, they are weak-willed, the abuse must not be too bad or they wouldn't be there, if an abused woman would just put her foot down the abuse would stop."¹²

In *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narrative* Phyllis Tribble combines literary criticism with hermeneutics of feminine theology to discuss women of ancient Israel. The text dealing with Tamar found in the 13th chapter of 2 Samuel was used as the primary biblical foundation for this ministry model.¹³ Tribble describes the state of Tamar after the rape. "Tamar is a woman of sorrows and acquainted with grief. She is cut off from the land of the living, stricken from the sins of their brother; yet she herself has done no violence and there is no deceit in her mouth. No matter what Absalom may plan for the future, the narrator understands the endless suffering of her present."¹⁴

Dr. Andrew Sung Park's *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* informs readers that the Korean word *han* describes the deep wound of victims. He says that *han* is the rupture of the soul caused by abuse, exploitation, injustice, and violence. When the soul is hurt so much, it burst symbolically, it aches. When the aching soul is

¹² Susan Brewster, *To Be an Anchor in the Storm: A guide for Families and Friends of Abused Women* (New York: Ballantine Books: New York, 1997), 4.

¹³ 2 Sam. 13

¹⁴ Phyllis Tribble, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 52.

wounded again by external violence, the victim suffers yet a deeper ache. The wound produced by such repeated abuse and injustice is *han* in the depths of the soul.¹⁵ Park's chapters on Shame and Guilt as well as Forgivingness and Forgiven-ness are insightful resources for the ministry model of dealing with the aftereffects of domestic violence.

In *Violence against Women and Children*, the editors helped to clarify the historical meaning of domestic violence as it pertain to United States History. In the article written by Ann Taves entitled, *The Power to See and the Power to Name: American Church History and the Problem of Domestic Violence*, she states, "Thus, to take the most pertinent example, while servants or slaves in the United States may or may not have thought of themselves or been thought of by others as part of their master's family, they were clearly a part of the master's household. A focus on domestic violence allows us to examine the patterns of violence that occurred across racial lines within slave owning households where kinship, if present, was often denied."¹⁶ The article written by Jennifer L. Manlowe entitled, *Seduced by Faith: Sexual Traumas and Their Embodied Effects* spoke to the belief of the researcher that survivors cannot become whole without the help of others. "No survivor can empower herself without help from others. Sexual trauma profoundly affects the survivor's human relationships, which can become infused with suspicion and vulnerable to disruption. Help or friendship may be perceived as counterfeit nurturance, as insincere and unreliable. Trust in people and communities can be impaired and difficult to recover."¹⁷

¹⁵ Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 12.

¹⁶ Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fortune, eds. *Violence against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1995), 263-264.

Developing Culturally-Relevant Responses to Domestic Abuse: Asha Family Services, Inc. is a publication by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. It provides a description of various services and models for ministry for all those who are affected by domestic violence. “Asha Family Services, Inc. is a comprehensive family violence intervention and prevention agency located in Milwaukee, WI. Asha, the first and only recognized culturally-specific family violence intervention and prevention program in Wisconsin, employs methods specific to African American families.”¹⁸

Edwards S. Kubany, Mari A. McCaig, and Janet R. Laconsay designed a self-help workbook for survivors of domestic violence who are experiencing the aftereffects. This book, *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence* provides step-by-step exercises to help survivors. The entire workbook is very helpful in defining what post traumatic stress disorder is and how to deal with it. “Women who have been physically or emotionally abused by their husbands, boyfriends, or other intimate partners often experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD symptoms are normal reactions to extreme stress. You are having these problems because of what happened to you-not because of anything about you.”¹⁹

In *Biblical Healing and Deliverance*, the authors discuss situations that cause hurt. They considered abuse whether physical, emotional verbal or sexual as situational hurt verses typical hurts or feelings. The level of healing depends upon the level of hurt. “What about the long-lasting and ongoing hurt? Sometimes physical, sexual or

¹⁷ Ibid., 336.

¹⁸ Antonia A. Vann, *Developing Culturally-Relevant Responses to Domestic Abuse: Asha Family Services, Inc.* (Harrisburg, PA: National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 2003), ii.

¹⁹ Edward S. Kubany, Mari A. McCaig Janet R. Laconsay, *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence: A Workbook for Women* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications Inc., 2004), 11.

emotional abuse goes on for years. Or the spouse is still unfaithful; the alcoholic still drinks every evening and weekend; the ridicule still continues.”²⁰

Sandra D. Wilson’s book, *Hurt People Hurt People*, has a section on dealing with forgiveness. Forgiveness is an essential part of healing for the survivor of domestic violence. Wilson tries “to untangle the thicket of truths and myths that make forgiving so difficult.”²¹

Preparation to deal with victims and survivors of domestic violence is essential to their healing. *Cultivating Wholeness* by Margaret Kornfeld addresses the issue of preparing counselors to help victims deal with the pain. “Counselors in community are often responding to those who have been or are now being abused, but they do not know it. Abuse has not been presented as the problem. The member comes for help with problems that are the result of abuse.”²²

Molefi Kete Asante’s most recent book, *The History of Africa: The Quest for Eternal Harmony* is a historical document from an African perspective. When it comes to violence within the African American community it allows one to take under consideration the plight of Africans and the abuse they endured. The violence toward African women by the Europeans was alarming. They were mistreated when the men did not work for the whites. “He imprisoned the women of villages when the men refused to work for the whites. He had kidnapped women and girls and treated them despicably.

²⁰ Chester and Betsy Kylstra, *Biblical Healing and Deliverance: A Guide to Experiencing Freedom from Sins of the Past, Destructive Beliefs, Emotional And Spiritual Pain, Curses and Oppression* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2005), 156.

²¹ Sandra D. Wilson, *Hurt People Hurt People: Hope and Healing for Yourself and Your Relationships* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), 188.

²² Margaret Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 256.

Hundreds of women were captured and held against their will simply because the whites could not get the men to work as rubber slaves.”²³

The Book of Discipline of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church 2006 expresses the concern of the denomination for the general welfare of humankind. This concern can be found in *The Social Creed*. “The concern of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church for the social well-being of humankind springs from the act of God in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Gospel, and from the life and witness of John Wesley and other fathers of Methodism who ministered to the physical, intellectual, and social need of the people to whom they preached the gospel of person redemption.”²⁴

An article written by Rev. E. Elaine Jack Crittenden entitled “The Church and Domestic Violence” gives an overview of alarming statistics on the prevalence of abuse in America. Crittenden list several topics that need to be discussed on the subject of domestic violence. She says, “The church must get back to what the church once was – the center of our very lives. The church was a place of healing, love, encouragement and protection. We need to make a concerted effort to get back on track.”²⁵

“Scripture Readings That Subordinate Women . . . Make Sure They Don’t Happen in Your Parrish” written in response to United States’ Bishop Moroney’s interview about the August 2000 action taken by the Irish Catholic Church. The Irish bishop proposed that seven scriptures that refer to the subordination of women be

²³ Molefi Kete Asante. *The History of Africa: The Quest for Eternal Harmony* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis, 2007), 228.

²⁴ William E. George, *The Book of Discipline of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church*. (Memphis, TN: The C.M.E. Publishing House, 2006), 28.

²⁵ E. Elaine Jack Crittenden, “The Church and Domestic Violence,” *The Christian Index* 139, no. 9 (2006): 31.

stricken from the Lectionary. “Colossians 3:12-21 which includes the offending phrase wives be submissive to your husbands, used to be assigned every year on the feast of the Holy Family (usually the Sunday after Christmas).”²⁶ A scripture such as this may be used by an abuser to justify his dominance over the victim.

“When the Abuser is Among Us: One Church’s Response to a Perpetrator” is written by Carol J. Adams. She shares the advice she gave to a church in turmoil over an incident of two boys that had been sexually assaulted in the church. “I explained that there is always a desire to push for speedy forgiveness and reconciliation, but that the church’s goal must be to be a naming and healing congregation, to model living with integrity.”²⁷ To bring about healing, her advice can be utilized by all who are dealing with abuse of any nature.

Dr. Susan Hutchison, a family physician in Irvine, CA shares her own experience of domestic violence in a *Medical Economics* article, “I Finally Walked Out.” She informs readers that domestic violence manifests itself in subtle-as well as obvious-ways. Hutchinson states, “As objective as we try to be as healthcare providers, our personal experiences inevitably affect how we treat patients. In my case, I strive to use my ‘been there’ knowledge of abusive relationships to help patients wean themselves from toxic unions. I’m now more empathetic and insightful, and I give better advice as I grow into a healthier individual.”²⁸ One of the goals of this ministry model is to create an atmosphere

²⁶ Future Church. “Scripture Readings That Subordinate Women...Make Sure They Don’t Happen in Your Parish,” (2001-2007) [e-newsletter] www.futurechurch.org/wicl/scriptures.htm, (Accessed 2 August 2007).

²⁷ Carol J. Adams. “When the Abuser is Among Us: One Church’s Response to a Perpetrator,” In *Working Together Newsletter* 14, no. 3 (Winter 1993/Spring 1994), www.faithtrustinstitute.org. (Accessed 25 July 2007).

where survivors of domestic violence can share their stories. In doing so, these women can become stronger and healthier so that they will be able to effectively minister to other survivors.

In “My Escape from Abuse,” an article written by Terri Metules, a registered nurse shares her story of surviving domestic violence twice. Her testimony is indicative of the pattern of some women who get involved in more than one domestic violence relationship. She found refuge in her parent’s home during her last escape from her second abusive husband. “My father was outraged when he found out what J. had done to us. I spurned his sympathy. He knew why. He looked me in the eye and said, ‘I’m not like them; I felt bad when I hit your mother.’”²⁹ Metules realized that she was traumatized growing up in an abusive home.

Nancy Nason-Clark is the author of an essay entitled, *When Terror Strikes at Home: The Interface between Religion and Domestic Violence*. Nason-Clark focuses on two areas, the religious victims and the religious perpetrators. She views the complex relationship between faith, violence and family ties. “For many religious victims, their faith sustains them through long periods of domestic crisis: it empowers them to ultimately flee their abuser and to seek refuge and safety where they begin a new life free of abuse. There are others who are not so fortunate: they are consumed by the ‘sacred silence’ on the issue, never finding spiritual or practical support that would enable them

²⁸ Susan Hutchinson, “I Finally Walked Out,” *Medical Economics* 82, no. 15 (5 Aug. 2005): 67, [http:// www.memag.com](http://www.memag.com). (Accessed 5 October 2006).

²⁹ Terri Metules, “My Escape from Abuse,” *RN* 67, no. 8 (Aug. 2004): 45, www.reweb.com. (Accessed 5 October 2006).

to leave the fear or the reality of violence behind.”³⁰ Nason-Clark also addresses the issue of forgiveness and that it does not erase the pain of abuse.

Among the authors of *Stop Domestic Violence: An Action Plan for Saving Lives* is Lou Brown. He is the father of Nicole Brown Simpson, the murdered wife of O.J. Simpson. In the chapter entitled Beginning Your Recovery, Brown says, “One important thing you’ll need is a *support system*. Whether or not you are in a shelter, try to connect with a group of other women who have gone through an abusive relationship. Sometimes shelters or women’s groups offer support groups for women in recovery from such relationships. You can try to start your own if you can’t find one. Ask first at shelters and get referrals to other sources of group help.”³¹

The Rape Recovery Handbook: Step by Step Help for Survivors of Sexual Assault was written by Aphrodite Matsakis. Many victims of domestic violence are also raped by their abusers. Matsakis encourages rape victims by saying, “If when you encounter a trigger, you experience anxiety, depression, increased nightmares, or other symptoms, this doesn’t mean you have not recovered. As previously explained, human beings are biologically programmed to respond to situations of great danger with the fight, flight or freeze reactions.”³²

Domestic violence does not only occur in the lives of women but in girls who are dating. *The Date Rape Prevention book: the Essential Guide for Girls and Women* was written by Scott Lindquist. Under the sub-topic Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

³⁰ Nancy Nason-Clark, “When Terror Strikes at Home: The Interface between Religion and Domestic Violence,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43:3 (2004):302-303.

³¹ Lou Brown, Francois Dubau, and Merritt McKeon, *Stop Domestic Violence: An Action Plan for Saving Lives* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1997), 173.

³² Aphrodite Matsakis, *The Rape Recovery Handbook: Step by Step Help for Survivors of Sexual Assault* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2003), 160.

Lindquist says, “If you have experienced a sexual assault, you may be left with painful wounds others can’t see but that you know are there. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur when normal people experience a terrifying situation they cannot control. In cases of sexual assault, PTSD symptoms can intrude into daily life and prevent a victim from working, having a relationship, or completing everyday tasks.”³³

The researcher concurs with David M. Haugen, the author of *Domestic Violence: Opposing Viewpoints*. Haugen says, “Women who have been victimized suffer both immediate and long range consequences to their physical and mental well being, and these consequences are similar to multiple forms of victimization. Although many effects are immediately apparent following the violent episode(s) other effects may last for years or may surface as intermittent problems. . . The aftereffects of partner violence may look very much like those experienced following a severe trauma – feelings of fearfulness, anxiety, confusion, anger, powerlessness. Reactions of shock, denial depression and withdrawal also may occur.”³⁴

James D. Torr and Karin L. Swisher are the authors of *Violence Against Women*. The chapter entitled *Programs that Empower Women Can Reduce Violence Against Women* written by Neil Websdale and Byron Johnson included a case study of the Job Readiness Program (JRP) where staff members of the JRP observed survivors of domestic violence who were in post-shelter residence. “Training services consist of various interventions designed to prepare battered women for the world of work and

³³ Scott Lindquist, *The Date Rape Prevention Book: The Essential Guide for Girls and Women* (Naperville, IL: Source Books, Inc., 2000), 120.

³⁴ David M. Haugen, *Domestic Violence: Opposing Viewpoints* (Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press, 2005), 74-75.

independent living. These include but are not limited to, the following: job counseling, job training/job search, and remedial education and literacy.”³⁵

Violence, Trauma, and Resistance: A Feminist Appraisal of Metz's Mysticism of Suffering Unto God is an article written by Johann M. Vento of the Georgian Court College. Vento states that “The trauma that results from violence against women presents a challenge to theological reflection on the meaning of suffering. The mysticism of suffering unto God in the theology of J.B. Metz offers an essential contribution to this reflection. There is a remarkable compatibility between women’s experiences of trauma and healing and Metz’s understanding of suffering unto God, especially in its refusal to glorify suffering.”³⁶ The researcher concurs with Vento that there is a problem when a theology exists that tries to present a positive meaning in radical suffering.

Faith Trust Institute, formerly known as The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, issues a monthly newsletter. In October 2005, Julie Owens wrote *Amazing Grace, How Can it Be? The Ponderings of a Christian Survivor of Domestic Violence*.³⁷ She recounts the horrific night she and her father experienced at the hands of her abusive husband. Owens ponders the meaning of grace in preparation for Domestic Violence Awareness month. “As I raise my candle and re-commit to waging peace for women, I will find myself again singing that old familiar hymn,

³⁵ James D. Torr and Karin L. Swisher, *Violence Against Women* (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, Inc., 1999), 173.

³⁶ Johann M. Vento, *Violence, Trauma, and Resistance: A Feminist Appraisal of Metz's Mysticism of Suffering Unto God* in ATLA Serials, <http://FirstSearch.oclc.org>. [on-line reference] (Accessed 1 August 2007).

³⁷ Julie A. Owens, *Amazing Grace, How Can it Be? The Ponderings of a Christian Survivor of Domestic Violence*, available from: <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org>. (Accessed 20 February 2006).

‘Through many dangers toils and snares, I have already come; T’is grace hath brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home.’; And once again, the notion of God’s unfailing grace will both comfort and confound me.”³⁸ At times for the Christian survivor of domestic violence the reality of God’s grace is thought provoking. The grace that Julie Owens writes about is the same grace that saved the researcher.

The books, essays, and articles listed in this review are reflective of the prevailing thoughts on the phenomenon of domestic violence. There is still new territory for writers and researchers to explore in the study of the aftereffects. The findings of the research on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder have proven to be similar to the research findings on the aftereffects of domestic violence. However, it is the belief of the researcher that there are some characteristics of the aftereffects of domestic violence that are unique to the experience. It is the hope of the researcher through this ministry model to encourage others to write and expand this field of study.

³⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Domestic violence is one of the most dehumanizing acts committed by one person against another. It is a global phenomenon found in many cultures and religions. Great strides are being taken to address the issue of domestic violence. However, too few theologians have addressed the paralyzing aftereffects domestic violence can have upon its victims and survivors. The reason this statement is made is because domestic violence and abuse knows no race, gender, color nor creed. It is not partial to any particular socio-economic background although there has been research to argue differently. The following theological foundation includes many thoughts that encompass the various aspects of domestic violence.

Theological Foundation

Violence against Women and Children, edited by Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fortune is a theological resource book. Carol J. Adams, a feminist theologian wrote an essay on the writings of Catharine MacKinnon. MacKinnon is also a feminist theologian who has been criticized for her writings on sexual victimization. Adams entitled her essay, "MacKinnon's Theory of Sex Inequality." On the subject of "Women's Words

about Sexual Victimization Become Oral Pornography”, Adams says that, “The woman who speaks about sexual harassment is experienced as part of a pornographic narrative.¹ The thought behind this is that when a woman speaks about her experience it becomes a sexual act.

MacKinnon gives an example of this theology by what happened during the Clarence Thomas hearings. “The more silent he is, the more powerful and credible. But the moment she opens her mouth, her credibility founders. Senators said they were offended by her; President Bush said he felt unclean. The dirt and un-cleanliness stuck to her. When she spoke truth to power, she was treated like a pig in a parlor. He said these things, but she was blamed.”²

Many victims of domestic violence do not report their experiences. Perhaps the thought of disbelief and discrediting keeps a victim from voicing her pain.

Judith Herman, confirming MacKinnon, tells us that “When the victim is already devalued (a woman, a child), she may find that the most traumatic events of her life take place outside the realm of socially validated reality. Her experience becomes unspeakable” (1992, 8). Given how much we do not know about the violence in women’s and children’s lives because there is no space in which to speak it, given, that is, that less than ten percent of all sexual assaults reported to police, our theological gestures at discussing violence against women and children may be epistemologically suspect.³

The researcher concurs with the thoughts of Judith Herman. One of the purposes of this project is to create a platform or give the space where survivors of domestic violence can give voice to their experience.

¹ Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fortune, *Violence against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1995), 19.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 27.

Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker in their essay, “For God So Loved the World?” argue that women have been acculturated to accept abuse. They stand on the premise that women have come to believe that they are to suffer because Christianity has as its basis, suffering. Brown and Parker conclude:

Christianity is an abusive theology that glorifies suffering. Is it any wonder that there is so much abuse in modern society when the predominant image or theology of the culture is of “divine child abuse”—God the Father demanding and carrying out the suffering and death of his own son? If Christianity is to be liberating for the oppressed, it must itself be liberated from this theology. We must do away with the atonement, this idea of a blood sin upon the whole human race which can be washed away only by the blood of the lamb. This bloodthirsty God is the God of the patriarchy who at the moment controls the whole Christian tradition. This raises the key question for oppressed people seeking liberation within this tradition. If we throw out the atonement is Christianity left? Can we call our new creation Christianity even with an asterisk?⁴

The researcher believes that survivors of domestic violence who are suffering from the aftereffects of their experience are not suffering for the cause of Jesus Christ. They are suffering because they have been violated at the hands of someone who has committed a crime. The theology of the researcher is based on the love of a compassionate God who sent God’s Son to suffer so that others can be liberated to enjoy the abundant life for which he came.

It is not God’s will for people to suffer. Yet, God is with humankind when suffering takes place. Victims of domestic violence suffer as they go through the experience. Survivors of domestic violence suffer the aftereffects even when the outside wounds have healed; they suffer on the inside.

⁴ Ibid., 56.

An explanation of this internal suffering from the deep wound of domestic violence and other abuse can be found in Dr. Andrew Sung Park's book entitled, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded*. He contends that the Christian theology of sin and repentance is of no comfort to the one who is suffering from abuse. Park says that there is a Korean word that can adequately describe the pain of this deep wound; that word is *han*. "Han is the rupture of the soul caused by abuse, exploitation, injustice, and violence. When the soul is hurt so much, it bursts symbolically; it aches. When the aching soul is wounded again by external violence, the victim suffers yet a deeper ache. The wound produced by such repeated abuse and injustice is han in the depths of the soul."⁵

Dr. Park goes on to describe han as an emotional heart attack; it is a fusion of being exposed, depressed, and anger that is brewed on the inside of an individual. "The powerful receive respect, protection, and appreciation, whereas the victim is further violated and denigrated. Once his or her boundary of protection is broken, it is hard for the victim to restore that boundary again."⁶ It is the belief of the researcher that the boundary may be restored through this project model. This may be achieved through the sharing of the survivors' stories with one another. Once they begin giving voice to what happened to them, healing may begin. It is possible for them to realize that they are not alone in their suffering.

The question may be asked, why is there suffering, especially for those who fall prey to the hands of an abuser. Dr. Marie M. Fortune wrote an article entitled, "The

⁵ Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 11-12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

Transformation of Suffering: A Biblical and Theological Perspective.’ She says that, “God allows such sinfulness because God has given persons free will and does not intervene when they choose to engage in unrighteous, unjust acts. Other people suffer from the consequences of these acts.”⁷

Dr. Fortune places suffering in two categories; voluntary suffering and involuntary suffering. Voluntary suffering involves making a painful decision that a person makes to accomplish a greater good. An example of voluntary suffering is like that of the civil rights workers during the 1960’s. Even though they were beaten, imprisoned, and some of them were put to death, they knew that their suffering was going to bring about liberation for many.

Involuntary suffering, on the other hand, is not chosen and does not serve a common good for anyone. Victims and survivors of domestic violence suffer involuntarily. Many of those who suffer ask the question, why.

Why did God send me this affliction? In the face of the personal crisis of violence, one’s deepest need is to somehow explain this experience, to give it specific meaning in one’s particular life. By doing this, victims begin to regain some control over the situation and the crisis. If one can point accurately to the cause, perhaps she/he can avoid that circumstance in the future: if one can ascribe meaning, then she/he can give it purpose, can incorporate the experience more quickly and not feel so overwhelmed by it.⁸

The one who inflicts involuntary suffering upon another must be held accountable for their actions. Not only are they to be held accountable but Jesus says, “And if the

⁷ Adams, *Violence against Women and Children*, 85.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.

same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive."⁹

Nancy Nason-Clark wrote an essay entitled, "When Terror Strikes at Home: The Interface Between Religion and Domestic Violence." The section entitled, "In What Ways Do Notions of Reconciliation and Forgiveness—Concepts at the Heart of a Judaeo-Christian Worldview—Place Women Victims at Greater Risk of Terror at Home?" she discusses forgiveness. When a survivor of domestic violence goes through the healing process, she must deal with the issue of forgiveness. "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing"¹⁰ has been the familiar and commonly used theological basis for the survivor toward the perpetrator. "Yet forgiveness does not erase the pain of the past, nor does it deny its implications. Rather, when forgiveness is place within a broader context of the journey from victim to survivor, it is achieved when the pain of the past no longer controls the future and the victim is no longer entrapped in a complicated web of anger and despair."¹¹

Saying, "I'm sorry" or "please, forgive me" has been the patch that has been placed on the deep wound of abuse far too long. Many victims of domestic violence have accepted these words only to be abused again and again. Dr. Marie Fortune warns against the temptation to move to quickly towards forgiveness. When this happens grace becomes cheap. She says that there has to be repentance and accountability on behalf of

⁹ Luke 17:4 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹⁰ Luke 23:34

¹¹ Nancy Nason-Clark, "When Terror Strikes at Home: The Interface Between Religion and Domestic Violence," *Journal Scientific Study of Religion* 43, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 304.

the perpetrators. The perpetrators have to acknowledge their sin against themselves, the ones they hurt, and the community.

Dr. Fortune refers to Jesus in the Gospels: “If our brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”¹² Dr. Fortune says that the perpetrator must be allowed to repent and not merely mouth the words, “I won’t do it again.”

Dr. Fortune had the opportunity of interviewing twenty-five incest offenders during treatment. “They said, ‘Tell the clergy for us that they should not forgive us so quickly’ Each of them upon arrest had gone to their minister and had been prayed over, “forgiven,” and sent home. Each of them said it was the worst thing that could have been done for them. That cheap grace had allowed them to continue to deny responsibility for their abuse of others. It in no way facilitated their repentance or their treatment.”¹³

The researcher agrees with Fortune that forgiveness is one of the most precious gifts that religious leaders and Christians can give. However it should not be “timetabled by someone other than the victim and should never be regarded as a guarantee for safety or protection.”¹⁴ A victim or survivor of domestic violence should not be forced into immediately accepting words of forgiveness from their abuser.

When an individual ask for forgiveness, repentance needs to have taken place in their heart. “Repentance means changing one’s behavior. This is the concrete expression

¹² Luke 17:1-4

¹³ Adams, *Violence against Women and Children*, 453.

¹⁴ Nason-Clark, “When Terror Strikes at Home: The Interface Between Religion and Domestic Violence,” 305.

of contrition. If anyone wants to repent of his or her sin he or she must turn back from sin and walk in the right way.”¹⁵ True repentance on the part of the abuser comes out of a haunting sense of guilt and shame.

Guilt and shame is not only felt by the perpetrator but the victims and survivors experience this as well. Dr. Park’s theology suggests that there is a distinct difference between guilt and shame, yet they overlap. He says, “In general, shame emerges when one is helplessly wronged or hurt by others. Guilt arises when one commits sin or does not do right. The victims of guilt (the offenders) are primarily haunted by and uneasy conscience; the victims of shame (the offended) largely suffer from embarrassment because they could not defend their own territory.”¹⁶ The researcher agrees with Dr. Park on the issues of guilt and shame; however she also feels that the offended experiences some feeling of guilt, also. Survivors of domestic violence who have children may experience guilty feelings if she thinks that she stayed in the relationship too long. Many children have been affected by abuse in their homes; therefore some mothers take the blame and feels that they should have gotten out of the relationship much sooner.

The Theological Foundation for this ministry model has been layered with issues such as sexual victimization, the acculturation of the acceptance of abuse, suffering, forgiveness, guilt and shame. In terms of domestic violence, all of these issues can be viewed through a biblical lens.

¹⁵ Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded*, 77.

¹⁶ Ibid., 35.

Biblical Foundations for the Ministry Focus

Abusive behavior is not a new phenomenon; it merely reflects the violent nature of human kind. It affects not only the victim, but the family and society as a whole. There are scriptural references to domestic violence in the Old Testament and references to healing in the New Testament.

Second Samuel 13 begins with a pending incestuous relationship between Amnon and his beautiful sister Tamar. Tamar and Absalom were David's children by his wife, Maacah. Amnon was David's son by Ahinoam, a Jezreelitess.¹⁷ Amnon is passionately in love with Tamar. Incestuous relationships were forbidden by Levitical law. "Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she is born in the same home or elsewhere."¹⁸

In the 6-11 verses, Amnon uses deceit in having Tamar summonsed by her father David. She has no reason to suspect anything of her brother.¹⁹ Many testimonials have been given by survivors of domestic violence, including that of the researcher, as to how the abuser expresses love at the beginning of the relationship. Not only does the abuser shows love toward the victim but displays it to her family.

Once Amnon gets Tamar alone, in verses 12-14, he overpowers her. She pleads with him not to do such a thing because it is socially unacceptable in Israel. Tamar now thinks of herself and tries to reason with him by asking, "What about me? Where can I

¹⁷ 2 Sam. 3:2-3

¹⁸ Lev. 18:19

¹⁹ 2 Sam. 13: 8-10

get rid of my disgrace?” The one being abused often pleads with the abuser. There are times when the victim tries to psychologically persuade the abuser not to do them harm. There are disenchanting thoughts in the minds of victims that they will somehow awaken a bit of conscience in their abuser.²⁰

After the rape, in verses 15-19, it states that Amnon’s hatred for Tamar is stronger than the love. Despite her urgent pleas, Amnon orders Tamar to be put outside. She does not get to leave in private humiliation but he has her thrown out in disgrace by a servant. Victims of domestic violence suffer from humiliating shame. “Humiliating shame arises as the keenly painful consciousness of something dishonorable, inappropriate, and outrageous done to a person by another. A victim suffers from the shame of humiliation. The primary causes of this type of shame are transgression and crime.”²¹

Verse 20 asserts that Tamar became a desolate woman. Her well-being was not an issue. Her brother Absalom questioned her as to what Amnon had done. But Absalom went on to tell Tamar to be quiet because after all he is her brother. He continued by telling her not to take what happened to her to heart. She becomes empty, alone and grim without anyone recognizing her depression.

The shame she felt as a result of this rape and incest was too great to suppress. Her loud cry, imposition of ashes, and the torn long robe symbolize the double shame of her helplessness and degradation. Her father, knowing what had happened, nonetheless kept silent out of his need to protect his son and successor, Amnon. David’s own sense

²⁰ Hans W. Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1964), 324.

²¹ Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded*, 38.

of his self-interest trumped his sense of justice for Tamar, leading his daughter to suffer the triple shame of humiliation: rape incest and her father's knowing silence.²²

Tamar's soiled reputation and state of mind affected more than just her. These verses indicate a violation of the family and social structures of Israel. Because of the sacrilege nature of rape, the act itself poses a serious threat to the society.

The immediate result is an act of violence born of excessive hate within the family, viz. Abishalom's murder of Aminon. There is, as Gunn aptly puts it (1978: 100), "excess of love at the beginning, excess of hate at the end." In the process of all this the son, Abishalom, is estranged from the father, David, and will eventually make war on him. The initial sacrilege, therefore, will precipitate the destruction of the entire social unit, the family. And because this particular family is the royal family the social fabric of all Israel will finally be threatened.²³

Absalom hated his brother and did not talk with him for two years. He sought revenge as to how to repay him for disgracing their sister. This hatred resulted in Amnon being killed by his brother. Long after the abuse has ceased, the painful affects of domestic violence can be felt by those associated with both the victim and the abuser.

Some survivors of domestic violence suffer from unhealthy feelings, thoughts and emotions brought on as result of their painful experiences. They fail to fulfill God's will and purpose for their lives because they have been traumatized. It is the belief of the researcher that freedom and empowerment can be found in the Word of God.

In Genesis 1:26, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."²⁴

²² Ibid., 40.

²³ Kyle McCarter, Jr., *Anchor Bible: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary of Second Samuel* (New York: Doubleday, 1984).

²⁴ Gen. 1:2 King James Version (KJV)

The word man, in Hebrew is *adam*.²⁵ The meaning represents a human being (an individual or the species, mankind). Women are included! From a social justice perspective, every person is fearfully and wonderfully made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, every individual is precious in God's sight. Women who are victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse are incorporated to receive God's love.

The New Testament is layered with many incidents of exploitation, discrimination and sexual victimization of women. The woman taken in adultery in chapter 8 of John was used by the Pharisees to trap Jesus.²⁶ Passages such as 1 Corinthians 14: 33b-36 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 have been used to discriminate against women in leadership in the church.

In chapter 16 of Acts, the girl with the spirit of divination was exploited by the men who used her for their financial gain. Paul and Silas met this young slave girl in Philippi who "had a spirit by which she predicted the future."²⁷ The Anchor Bible says that this girl had a gift of prophecy.

Domestic violence has no boundaries when it comes to the women it affects. The slave girl represents all women for she was not given a name. The one thing she had been given was a gift from God that had been abused by greedy men who profited from her. Philippi was a trade center which may explain the presence of Lydia and the dying and selling of purple. The city was therefore visited by many of whom the men sought ways in which to make money. "During their time with Lydia, Paul and his companions

²⁵ *The New Strong's Complete Dictionary of Bible Words* (1996), s.v. "Adam."

²⁶ John 8:3-11

²⁷ Acts 16:16-19

encountered a slave girl with a *spirit of divination* whose fortune-telling was very lucrative for her owners. She rightly identified the missionaries as *slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation*. After many days of this, Paul commanded the spirit to leave the girl, reminiscent of Jesus' exorcisms.²⁸ These exorcisms set the victims free.

Domestic violence and abuse is an evil which needs to be exorcised from society. Just like the slave girl many women in abusive relationships are bound to a situation in which they can not see their way out. For various reasons such as fear, shame, hopelessness, insecurity, and low self esteem victims feel trapped in a situation of which there seems to be no escape. The girl with the spirit of divination probably experienced what Nancy Nason-Clark and Catherine Clark Kroeger calls an unhealthy relationship.

- You are belittled, and your value and your accomplishments are not recognized.
- You are threatened.
- You are slapped, pushed, kicked or hurt.
- You are kept away from your family and friends.
- There is extreme possessiveness or jealousy.
- Your partner insists on being together all the time, or on monitoring what you do when you are alone.
- You, your family, your work, your church and your friends are disrespected.
- You are ignored when you give an opinion, your likes and dislikes count for nothing.
- You are called names that are embarrassing and hurtful.
- You are blamed for all the problems.²⁹

The slave girl could not set herself free without the intervention of Paul and Silas who did not turn away from her but relieved her. It is through the intervention of others

²⁸ Watson Mills and Richard F. Wilson, *Mercer Commentary on the Bible* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995), 1107.

²⁹ Nancy Nason-Clark and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *Refuge from Abuse: Healing and Hope for Abused Christian Women* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 8.

that victims of domestic violence can be set free. This intervention includes programs, ministries, and legislation on the part of political activist who will not turn their heads away from the reality of the atrocity of domestic violence.

With the departure of the spirit went also the fortune of the slave-girl's owners. Once again, the material effect of the missionaries' efforts leads to adverse results. The owners drag Paul and Silas into the marketplace before the authorities and hide their rage at economic loss behind political charges that will stick: *These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.* The crowds join in, and the local authorities acquiesce.³⁰

The men in Philippi made a profit off of the slave girl. Once she was set free they blamed Paul and Silas for bringing about strange customs that disturbed the city. Who stands to profit from domestic violence and abuse? If it can be called a profit it would be the perpetrators. Their need to exert power and control over their victims is a gain in their eyes. When they are exposed they place the blame everywhere else except upon themselves. Most abusers blame the victims for having to be treated in such a manner.

After the exorcism Paul and Silas are dragged into the forum before the magistrates, stripped, beaten with rods and placed into the dungeon of the prison over night. These were the consequences of setting the slave girl free. What a price they paid for a stranger. Just as Paul and Silas suffered consequences for helping this young girl, there is also a cost in helping victims of domestic violence.

Paul and Silas represent the church and others who speak out against domestic violence and abuse. It is difficult to oppose institutions and cultures that have been

³⁰ Mills, *Mercer Commentary on the Bible*, 1107.

accepting of this behavior. Domestic violence has been around for centuries; this will be discussed in more detail in the Historical Foundation.

The church is the one institution that a victim of domestic violence can seek refuge. It is the belief of the researcher that this is still true. Unfortunately there have been individuals who have taken the word of God and misconstrued it to support their desire to continue permitting domestic violence and abuse. A good example is taking those scriptures that pertain to slavery and submission and using them to subvert the minds of helpless victims. Those who speak out against the misuse of scripture are said to be Womanist, feminist and liberators who come with a strange doctrine.

Another cost for advocates is their time and persistence for the cause. Helping victims, survivors and all who are associated with them is an ongoing process. Individuals and organizations must be committed to the cause of liberation. The sacrifice of time and resources are necessary for helping victims. If Paul and Silas had not done what they did for the slave girl there is no telling as to her fate.

There is even a greater cost if something is not done about domestic violence and abuse. Too many victims do not live to become survivors. The children who are involved are often abused by the perpetrator. Not only that, but children are affected in so many other ways. If they do not grow up to become the abused they sometimes become the abuser.

The consequences that Paul and Silas suffered were short lived. Their stay in prison was overnight.

The next scene resembles a rescue—from prison scene, but there is a significant difference. Prayers, hymn singing, and an earthquake lead not to the rescue of Paul and Silas from prison, but rather the deliverance of the Philippian jailer and his household to salvation.

When the jailer awakens to discover the prison doors opened, he draws his sword to take his own life before the local authorities can. But Paul interrupts; the earthquake had opened the prison doors and unfastened the prisoners' fetters, but Paul and Silas were still there. Trembling, the jailer asks, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Paul and Silas respond with the kerygma in a nutshell, *Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved you and your household.* In the middle of the night these words come true. Both parties receive cleansing waters one for wounds, the other for baptism— and a symbolic Lord's Supper follows as the jailer sets food before them. Like Lydia, the jailer demonstrates the authenticity of his faith by acting as the proper host.³¹

An entire household was saved because of the price that Paul and Silas paid. This is encouraging to those who are involved in the liberation of individuals who are suffering from domestic violence and abuse. All who are involved in a domestic violence situation can benefit. This includes the perpetrator.

From the Old to the New Testaments, the Bible teaches that an individual should love their neighbor as they love themselves. Survivors of domestic violence may have a hard time loving themselves or have a low opinion of themselves because of the ridiculing and criticizing that they heard from their abuser. Self-love is therefore important for the survivor to learn. Recognizing the unconditional love that God showed humankind by sending God's son is a major move toward self-love.

In chapter 5 of the Book of Mark Jesus is summoned by the father of a young girl who is very ill.³² As He was going to see about the girl, he was interrupted. In the crowd was a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. She spent all of her money going from doctor to doctor only to get worse. She determined in her mind that if she could just

³¹ Ibid., 1108.

³² Mark 5:22

touch Jesus' cloak she would be healed. Immediately, her bleeding stopped and she knew that she had been healed.

Jesus realized that some power had left and wanted to know who touched him. His disciples could not believe that he would be asking such a question in a pressing crowd. When the woman recognized what had happened to her she came trembling and knelt at Jesus' feet. She then told him her story. Jesus told her that her faith had healed her and to go in peace.

A woman suffering from a bleeding disorder was considered ceremonially unclean. She was not allowed in public. In the case of the woman in the text, twelve years was a long time to be isolated from family and the community.

Women who are victims of domestic violence experience times of isolation. The abuser often tries to keep the one he is abusing close by. The focus of this project however, is on the effects of domestic violence even when the abuser is out of the picture. Some women go through periods of isolation which is a sign of depression and other emotional disorders.

Returning to the text in Mark 5, the girl died. Death is not a challenge for the power of God. When Jesus arrived at the home, he put all of the mourners out. He took her by the hand and said, "*Talitha cumi*; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise."³³

The title of this project is: Empowering Women to Rise Up: Ministry for the Aftereffects of Domestic Violence and Abuse. The girl in the Mark 5 passage was not a victim of domestic violence. However, she was in an immobilized state. Upon her awakening, Jesus requests that she be given something to eat. Domestic violence places a

³³ Mark 5:41(KJV)

woman in a lying down state of mind and spirit. It is our Lord's desire for women of abuse to get up and return to life. It is through the church and other entities that victims of domestic violence are to be nourished and restored.

The August 2007 Intensive of United Theological Seminary of Trotwood, OH was entitled, "Women in Ministry: Reconcilers, Reformers and Revolutionaries." One of the speakers for the week was Bishop Charlene Payne Kammerer of the United Methodist Church. Bishop Kammerer chose for her text Matthew 15:22-28, the story of the Canaanite woman who sought healing from Jesus for her demon possessed daughter. Jesus had no response for the woman who was being urged away by the disciples. Jesus then explained to her that he was sent for the lost sheep of Israel. In spite of being referred to as a dog, the woman was persistent in her plea. Because of her faith, Jesus answered her request.

As Bishop Kammerer expounded upon the text the researcher began seeing it through the lens of domestic violence. Bishop Kammerer said that Jesus was struggling as to what to do in his ministry.³⁴

Jesus can be seen in the first part of the story as the attitude of the church. The church tends to want to take care of its own. It has the propensity to not want to go beyond the walls to help others. From time to time the church has been inclined to turn its face away from the reality of social ills and not get involved in social justice and political activism.

The church struggles as to what to do about the issue of domestic violence for various reasons:

³⁴ Charlene Kammerer, "Wednesday Worship Service-D.Min. Intensive" (Lecture, United Theological Seminary, Trotwood, OH, 15 August 2007) .

1. Domestic violence is happening in the church. Abusers and the abused are in the church and the crime is sometimes committed by church leaders.

2. There is confusion in the interpretation of scripture. Scriptures on submission such as “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands” and has been used to validate abuse.³⁵

Bishop Kammerer said that the woman changed Jesus’ understanding of his mission and ministry by God.³⁶ The church needs to rethink its mission and ministries to help those who are victims and survivors of domestic violence. The Canaanite woman can be seen as those who want to help victims and survivors of abuse. Those who want to help are sometimes rejected by the church because of the history of the acceptance of domestic violence within the church.

Survivors and victims are unlikely to speak up for themselves. They need someone who will go before God and the powers that be, on their behalf. They too are invited to the table of the Lord where they have a voice.

The Canaanite woman was persistent in her request for healing for her daughter. Advocates for domestic violence have to be persistent in seeking social justice and political action on behalf of victims and survivors. The church along with advocates for justice should kneel before God to ask for a blessing for someone else. Unlike David who ignored his daughter Tamar, this Canaanite woman sought help for her daughter.

³⁵ Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18

³⁶ Charlene Kammerer, “Wednesday Worship Service-D.Min. Intensive” (Lecture, United Theological Seminary, Trottwood, OH, 15 August 2007).

Once the process of restoration and healing begins the victim becomes a survivor. It is God's plan for the survivor to be strengthened during the process of healing. It was most unfortunate and cruel for Tamar to be left desolate. Her story went on without being present and without her receiving the inheritance that God has for God's children. Tamar never knew about Jesus. He is the advantage that survivors of domestic violence have today.

In chapter 1 of Colossians, Paul refers to the entitlement of the inheritance for the saints of the kingdom of light.³⁷ "Having a portion in the inheritance of the saints means being transposed into the kingdom (basileia) of the beloved who is placed in opposition to the realm of darkness."³⁸ For the saints or the Christians, darkness represents the kingdom that is ruled by Satan. Domestic violence is part of that kingdom but the survivor has been rescued. Paul told the Colossians, "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."³⁹ This rescue is not something that has to take place in the future; it has already taken place because God has already delivered. This deliverance is from all kinds of circumstances such as persecution, death, and even abuse.

Freedom from is just as important as *freedom to*. Without the latter, the former would be an empty freedom or one without a master. What this might lead to can be ascertained from the misery of some of the freed slaves from the time of Paul, as well as also in American history of the emancipation of the slaves in the Southern States at and after the time of the Civil War. Redemption is the transfer from the dominion of a bad over lord into the dominion of a good one. This concept of freedom

³⁷ Col. 1:9-14

³⁸ Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, *The Anchor Bible: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary: Colossians* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 187.

³⁹ Ibid., 13-14.

corresponds exactly to the OT reports of the redemption of Israel out of Egypt. God demands of Pharaoh through Moses,; Israel is my first-born son, and I demand of you to let my son go, *so that he can serve me.*⁴⁰

A survivor of domestic violence has been set free from their abuser's physical assaults. However, the emotional pain will continue if the survivor is not told and shown the love and redemption of God. She has to accept and receive the redemptive work that God has done on her behalf through grace.

Historical Foundations

The ministry focus of this project is to empower women by educating them, using scripture to help them rise up out of the aftereffects of domestic violence and abuse. Members of the congregations who will be involved in the ministry of empowering women need to be informed of the gravity and history of domestic violence in society.

Wife beating has been around for many centuries. The image of the cave man dragging his woman with one hand and a holding a club in the other indicates society's thoughts as to how long this behavior has existed. Male violence toward women and children existed in ancient Rome and Greece. The order of priority for a man was father, cattle, mother and then children. With that hierarchy, it is understandable as to why a man would consider his family as his property.⁴¹

Jesus Christ taught total equality in spite of the Jewish tradition of female subjection. A line in a prayer spoken by a Jewish man daily is: "I thank God that He did

⁴⁰ Ibid., 190.

⁴¹ Grant L. Martin, *Counseling for Family Violence and Abuse* (Waco, TX,: Word Books, 1987), 22.

not make me a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.”⁴² With such a prayer, one could understand Paul’s statement in Galatians 3:38 that, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” This indicates that a woman was a person and not just a piece of property.

The controlling man attitude filtered into the European society. Women were viewed as needing strict control. During the medieval period, the church had clergy who taught that husbands had a right and an obligation to beat their wives. “Rules of Marriage,” written by Friar Cherubino is a good example of the teaching of the times. “He stated that if a husband’s verbal correction of his wife was not effective, then he was to “. . . take up a stick and beat her, not in rage, but out of charity and concern for her soul, so that the beating will rebound to your merit and her good.”⁴³

There were periods throughout early history where individuals tried to call attention to the abuse of women. In the thirteenth century a Jewish rabbi made the following comments.

The cry of the daughter of our people has been heard concerning the sons of Israel who raise their hands to strike their wives. Yet who has given a husband the authority to beat his wife? Is he not rather forbidden to strike any person in Israel? Nevertheless have we heard of cases where Jewish women complained regarding their treatment before the Communities, and no action was taken on their behalf.⁴⁴

The Renaissance and Reformation periods brought about social, political and religious changes. However by the sixteenth century there was little change toward the treatment of women. Martin Luther is said to have made a statement

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

while boasting about his successful marriage that when his wife became “saucy” all she received was a “box on the ear.”⁴⁵ He assaulted his wife as if she was an animal in obedience school.

John Stuart Mill wrote a book entitled, *The Subjection of Women*, in the late 1860’s. He spoke out against the mistreatment of women.

The sufferings, immoralities, evils of all sorts, produced in innumerable cases by the subjection of individual women to individual men are far too terrible to be over looked...The law of servitude in marriage is a monstrous contradiction to all the principles of the modern world...Marriage is the only actual bondage known to our law. There remains no legal slaves except the mistress of every house.⁴⁶

The attitude of permitting a man to strike his wife is an unfortunate American tradition. It was accepted as a man’s right to beat a woman. Even with the acceptance, there were those political activists who fought to break the tradition of domestic violence.

The Massachusetts Bay Colony established a rule in 1655, that if a man beat his wife, he was fined a maximum of ten pounds and/or given corporal punishment. By 1870, the same year that the C.M. E. Church was founded, Massachusetts and Alabama began to reject the legal justification for wife beating.⁴⁷ Many states began granting one spouse permission to divorce another based upon abuse. However by 1910, there were still eleven states that would not grant a divorce based upon domestic violence.

It can not be discounted that African men and women endured horrible conditions during the years of the slave trade. Molefi Asante writes, quoting Hoschschild,

⁴⁵ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 26.

“What happens to all of the women who are taken prisoners? Some are set free when their husbands have done all they can to regain the one who is dearest to them. Others are forced to work in the fields and also to work as prostitutes. Our most respected men here have told us with tears in their eyes and much vexation in their hearts that they had recently seen a group of seven hundred women chained together and transported to the coast on steamboats...So can anyone feel truly surprised that the discontent has finally come to the surface?”⁴⁸

Consideration must be given that slavery in America has some bearing on domestic violence in the African American community. According to Edward Wimberly, “Abuse is the attempt to gain a sense of meaning and value at the expense of the growth and well-being of another.”⁴⁹ Many theories have surfaced as to why African American men respond to being devalued with violence. How African American women respond to being devalued need to be examined. African American men and women have internalized the devaluation of African American women by society as a whole.

It is most unfortunate when the devaluation of an African American woman is exercised by an African American man. This is reflective of what happened during the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings in October 1991. Rosemary L. Bray writes, “By Sunday evening, Anita Hill’s testimony lay buried under an avalanche of insinuation and innuendo. Before the eyes of nation a tenured law professor beloved by her students was transformed into an evil, opportunistic harpy; a deeply religious Baptist was turned into a sick and delusional woman possessed by Satan and in need of exorcism, this youngest of

⁴⁸ Molefi Kete Asante, *The History of Africa: The Quest for Eternal Harmony* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2007), 228.

⁴⁹ Wimberly, *Counseling African and American Families*, 112.

thirteen children from a loving family became a frustrated spinster longing for the attention of her fast-track superior, bent on exacting a cruel revenge for his rejection.”⁵⁰

The researcher remembers the expressions of sadness on Anita’s face during the trial.

Domestic violence is a festering crime that thrives off of the power and control of an individual who can not deal with his or her own inadequacies and insecurities. Several years prior to the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings activist had been on the march against domestic violence and abuse. The same beliefs and cultural norms that promoted the subjugation of women over the years have also promoted advocacy against it.

Some of the benchmarks of change occurred during the time that the researcher was living in an abusive relationship. The movement during the 1970’s brought about public awareness of domestic violence issues. “In 1974, the first shelter for battered women was established. Opening the shelter led to the establishment of hundreds of shelter and domestic violence programs throughout the Unites. These programs provide emotional, financial, and vocational assistance to domestic violence survivors and their children. Sometimes legal assistance and support is even provided.”⁵¹

It was also during the 1970’s that police officers were taught to respond differently to calls related to domestic violence. Previously they went into a situation only to bring about peace and leave saying, “You all behave yourselves.” “During the 1970’s and earlier, police officers responding to reports of Domestic Disturbances handled the calls by getting the stories (separately) of those involved, and trying to treat

⁵⁰ Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fortune, “Taking Sides against Ourselves,” *Violence against Women and Children* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 363.

⁵¹ Peter Moser, *The History of Domestic Violence: Early Days of Domestic Violence, Police Intervention, Court Rulings*, available from http://abuse.suite.101.com/article.cfm/the_history_of_domestic_violence. (Accessed 10 October 2007).

the situations with Band-Aids. To do so they would talk to the people to calm them. Then, they would warn each person involved to make sure that they (the police) did not have to return to the home for intervention in such problems. Sometimes they would ensure that there would not be further problems by threatening the parties with arrest.”⁵²

Twenty years later during the 1990’s domestic violence was treated as a serious problem. They no longer merely threatened the parties involved but they began arresting. Their responses were not just peace making efforts but they were saving lives. “In some state laws were enacted that held police personally liable if they failed to arrest, and it resulted in a victim later being killed or injured. The states would levy fines of up one thousand dollars on each officer who failed to follow the new regulation.”⁵³ At this time officers had the authority to issue Temporary Restraining Orders when the courts were not open. If an individual violated the restraining order they could be held without bail.

Few’s Memorial, the context of this project is located in Wayne County along with other cities that make up the Downriver area of Michigan. First Step is an organization that was founded in 1978 to help reduce domestic violence and sexual assault in Wayne County. Their first twenty bed shelter was opened in 1983. Because of their acceptance and the support of the community they continue to be change agents against domestic violence and abuse. “First Step, in the past and in the future, will meet the challenges and work diligently in the best interest of the survivors and the communities that we serve.”⁵⁴

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ First Step: Western and Downriver Wayne County Project on Domestic and Sexual Violence, “Overcoming Violence Together,” available from <http://www.firststep-mi.org/about/history.htm>. (Accessed 2 October 2007).

Throughout the history of humankind there have been those who advocated against this sin. As history continues to unfold it is hoped that this generation will create a turn in the tide against domestic violence and sins committed against those who are the vulnerable of society. The ministry model for this research project can be a tool to help bring about that turn in the tide.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Outline of the Research Model

The effect of domestic violence does not end with the termination of the relationship between the abused and the perpetrator. The aftereffects or the trauma of the abuse may be felt many years following the experience. After the abuse has ceased, what are some steps leading toward restoration and healing for women who are survivors of domestic violence? What did not happen in the shelter or protective process which caused the women not to receive what they needed to be restored? Why are the women left with the aftereffects?

Many studies have been done on the phenomenon of domestic violence. Social services and ministries have aided women for many years by way of shelters and places of refuge for those who need immediate help from danger. Laws have been enacted to help victims and prosecute perpetrators. In spite of the progress that has been made to understand and to somewhat alleviate the violence there is still territory to be explored concerning the aftereffects.

The aftereffects of domestic violence can stifle a woman's ability to live holistically. Her suffering is not through physical pain but through psychological and emotional pain which have not healed because it is not noticeably visible. This lack of

visibility is not always blindness on the part of those who may want to help. For various reasons a survivor may masquerade her suffering.

The importance of this study is to create an educational model that can be used to help transform and empower survivors of domestic violence who are experiencing the aftereffects. It is also necessary for the survivors to connect with those who have had similar experiences. "Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation."¹ Survivors must rid the fear that what they experienced only happened to them.

This study attempted to create an educational model that included a platform on which survivors of domestic violence, who were experiencing the aftereffects could share what had happened to them. They were allowed to freely tell their story. This time of sharing afforded them the opportunity to witness that they were not alone in their experience. The study also provided a biblically based curriculum which allowed the clients to see how their lives could be transformed through the word of God. It was hoped that this process would educate the women on how to raise their self-esteem. During this potential process of healing, the women were also to be strengthened so that they could help other women by educating them on how to recover from the aftereffects of domestic violence.

To establish the validity of this ministry project the methodology of data triangulation was chosen to document the process. The researcher performed a content analysis through the methods of: 1) Observation; 2) Interviews; 3) Focus Group. The research methods that were used to test the treatment hypothesis were conducted using a

¹ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence-From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997), 133.

qualitative research design.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this project is that women who are survivors of domestic violence can be empowered to overcome the aftereffects. The problem of this study is to create a biblically based educational tool. This tool will provide a platform to promote growth to help survivors of domestic violence overcome the aftereffects. This restoration process is necessary even though the woman is no longer involved in the intimate relationship.

Several steps must be taken in order for the survivor to be restored and empowered to rise up out of the aftereffects of domestic violence. First, the survivor must be able to tell her story so that she can be free from secrets. Domestic violence has long since been held in secrecy by the victim, the perpetrator, the church and society.

Secondly, in the restoration process, self-esteem must be built on a strong biblical foundation. Mere generic phrases such as “you are beautiful,” or “you are capable,” are not enough. Women, who are experiencing aftereffects, are not generic. In the restoration process, the healing requires the survivor to jump from the sidelines and reach deeply within herself to get to the root of the hurt.²

Restoration is a continuing process but with time and effective care the survivor can become stronger. Finally, once a survivor is on the road to restoration she should be able to encourage other women to start their journey of healing. There is no greater witness than one who has experienced the hurt and recovery.

² Jeanne Roberts, *I Cry God! Hope and Healing for Survivors of Childhood Abuse* (Oak Harbor, WA: Xlibris, 2003), 172.

Many programs exist to help the victims of domestic violence escape immediate danger. Once the victims are safe and out of that relationship they enter a new status from that of victim to that of survivor. The challenge for the survivor is processing what happened to them and why did it happen to them. It then becomes necessary for these and similar questions to be processed and answered with the help of outside intervention. This intervention should be designed to educate and bring about awareness for the need of restoration for the survivor.

Intervention

This ministry project consisted of four sessions. The first session was a personal taped recorded interview with each of the clients by the researcher. There were several objectives for the personal recorded interviews. The first objective was to listen to the client talk about her thoughts, feelings and emotions since her domestic violence experience. The second objective was to provide historical information about the client and her domestic violence experience. The third objective was for the researcher to observe the behavior and responses given. The last objective was to allow the researcher to talk about what she had experienced. This was therapeutic for the researcher however it was thought necessary for the clients to know that they were talking with someone who understood what they were going through. Most of the clients expressed that they had not extensively talked to anyone about their ordeal.

There were three-two hour structured sessions with the group. The objectives for the group sessions were as follows:

- To allow the client to freely tell her story
- To let the client know that she is not alone in her experience
- To restore the client's self-esteem
- To gain strength to help other victims overcome the aftereffects of domestic violence.

Each session had a specific topic of discussion. The segments of the session were based upon the particular subject of the day's session. The session included the varying combination of testimonials, scripture reading, and three study questions for discussion, role play, videos, tape recordings, articles, CDs, litanies, silent reflection, closing prayer and evaluation. The first session's testimonial period focused on the personal interviews. The testimonials for sessions two and three were a reflection of the previous session.

The purposes of the testimonials were to allow the women to share and to listen to each other. Specific scriptures were chosen to establish a biblical foundation so that the women could see that God, through the Word of God, was aware of their situation and that God provides healing. Audio/visual aids were used to increase awareness and to incite discussion. These aids included CD player, cassette tape recorder and DVD player. The curriculum for the sessions was placed in a pocket folder that included the session agenda, articles, reference materials, litany, note paper, an evaluation form to be filled after each meeting and an exit questionnaire. The participants also received a pen, a pencil, and a Bible. Folders were given back to the researcher after each session for review.

Session Format

The general format of the sessions was as follows:

1. Introduction of the Facilitator and Group Members. (15 minutes).
 - A. Prayer and Welcome.
 - B. Purpose of the Group.
 1. Distribute folders.
 2. Discuss the purpose and contents of the folder.
 3. Anonymity.
 - C. Testimonials (two-three sentence statements as to why you are here).
- II. Give the topic of today's session (30 minutes include 10 minute break).
 - A. Read Scriptures.
 - B. Three study questions that pertain to the topic.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - C. Silent Reflection.
 - D. Break.
- III. Discussion of the three questions. (1 hour).
 - A. Read an article, view video, listened to a CD or tape recording.
- IV. Closure. (15 minutes).
 - A. Responsive Healing Litany.
 - B. Completion of Evaluation Form.
 - C. Prayer Request.
 - D. Closing prayer.

The plan was for the group to meet once a week. The researcher was the facilitator for each session. The topics for discussion, scriptures, and audio/visual aids or articles were as follows:

Session 1:

Topic: *Overcoming Aftereffects*

Scriptures: Philippians 4:13, Romans 8:15, 1Timothy 1:7 and John 8:32

Article: "If I Could Close My Eyes"³

Role Play

Session 2:

Topic: *Discovering You by Trusting in God*

Scriptures: Matthew 6:25-34, Psalm 55:22-23 and Mark 15:21-28

DVD: Watched screen play, "Never Say Never"⁴

CD: Listened to CD by Dianne Reeves, "Testify"⁵

Session 3:

Topic: Sharing My Story

Cassette Recording: Listened to ABC's Diane Sawyer, Domestic Violence Interview⁶

³ Abigail R. Esman, "If I Could Close My Eyes, A story of love, pain, hope, and release" Diane, *the Curves Magazine* (Fall 2006), 34.

⁴ Theodore K. Sims, "Never Say Never," A Musical Gospel Stage Play T & G Productions 2007 DVD.

⁵ Diane Reeves, "Testify" *In the Moment Live in Concert [Live]*, Blue Note Records, 2000, compact disc.

The evaluation form was to be filled at the end of each session and given to the researcher. The participants were to reflect upon the previous session and be prepared to share at the next session. The final and third session was designed so that the participants would have ample time to share in their group experience.

Selection of Participants

The researcher began observing women at various gatherings at the church and meetings held away from the church building when the discussion of domestic violence and abuse arose. It was shared with the women that a study was being conducted on the aftereffects of domestic violence. Many women came forth in sharing their experiences. Some even recommended their daughters, nieces, sisters and other female relatives and friends, to talk with the researcher. Some of the women were still involved in a relationship, while others were not.

A Missionary Society meeting was held in September 2006 at the home of the researcher/pastor. It became an open discussion on domestic violence. At that meeting, the annual prayer breakfast was discussed and scheduled. The theme selected for the prayer breakfast was, "Christian Missionaries Helping Victims of Domestic Violence to Arise and Walk into an Abundant Life." The prayer breakfast was on October 21, 2006 at Few's Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. An article of the event was published in the Christian Index, the official periodical of the C.M.E. Church.

⁶Susan Still, "Domestic Violence Interview," interview by Diane Sawyer, 20/20 Television (October 27, 2006).

During that missionary meeting and events following, several women expressed their desire to be a part of this project. Women were considered to be a part of this project based upon the fact that they were no longer involved in an intimate relationship with their abusers.

A major factor in determining the women selected was their willingness to tell their stories. A degree of openness and honesty is required for the integrity of the research. There had to be some degree of openness, even though evasiveness and hesitancy maybe symptoms of those who were experiencing the aftereffects of domestic violence or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD develops after a terrifying ordeal that involved physical harm or the threat of physical harm. The person who develops PTSD may have been the one who was harmed, the harm may have happened to a loved one, or the person may have witnessed a harmful event that happened to loved ones or strangers.⁷ Those who expressed obvious doubt and hesitation were not selected.

Another factor in determining the women selected can not be articulated. It was the look, in the eyes of the women, which expressed a desire of hope for transformation to take place if they participated in the project. Although several women were approached to be participants in this study, only five were selected for the sake of the project. The participants in the project were survivors of domestic violence who were no longer intimately involved with their abusers. Some of the participants were still in contact with their abusers because they had children together.

⁷ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, National Institute of Health, "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Research Fact Sheet," National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Homepage, available from: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-research-fact-sheet.shtml> (Accessed 30 July 2007).

Two participants were selected from the members of the missionary society. Another participant is also a part of the context, but is not a missionary. Two other participants left the church some years ago but they still had family ties and visit periodically. The participants, now referred to as clients, were identified by numbers one through five because of the sensitivity of the project.

The ages of the clients ranged from 39 to 58 years old. Only one out of the group was married. All of the clients were gainfully employed during and after their domestic violence experiences. Three of the clients were on disability after working for several years; two of the participants were currently employed.

The time period since their domestic violence experiences ranged from as recent as 3 years ago to over 50 years ago. All of the clients expressed a sincere desire to tell their stories. With the exception of one of the women, the clients did not receive counseling to help them deal with the trauma of domestic violence.

Research Design

The purpose of this ministry project was to create an educational model that could be used to empower women who were dealing with the aftereffects of domestic violence. To achieve this purpose a qualitative approach was used for the research design. The strategy used in this qualitative approach was ethnographic. Ethnographies are used when “the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational data.”⁸ The research process is flexible and typically evolves contextually in response to the lived realities encountered

⁸ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 14.

in the fields setting.”⁹

The strategy of ethnographic research is a very broad area with a large variety of practitioners and methods. Participant observation is the most common approach used in field research. “The ethnographer becomes immersed in the culture as an active participant and records extensive field notes.”¹⁰

A focus group was formed consisting of five women who had experienced domestic violence and abuse. This particular strategy was a challenge for the researcher because she too, was a survivor. There were certain behaviors that the women expressed that they were exemplifying as a result of their abuse experiences. This behavior was observed and noted by researcher so that it could be addressed during the healing process. The final strategy of the qualitative approach was narrative research.

Narrative research is a form of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives. This information is then retold or restored by the researcher into a narrative chronology. In the end, the narrative combines views from the participant’s life with those of the researcher’s life in a collaborative narrative.¹¹

Each client selected for the project provided taped interviews of their experiences. Some of the women related to incidents that happened in their childhood or those of their families. These interviews were transcribed and placed in narrative form.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Jackie Baston, “Data Planning and Analysis” (Lecture, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH, January 22-26, 2007).

¹¹ Ibid.

Instrumentation

When the participants arrived for the personal interview, an entrance questionnaire was given prior to the actual taping. The purpose and the objective of the questionnaire were explained to each participant. The clients were advised that this questionnaire required yes/no responses with the exception of question number two. Question number two required them to circle the number of years that they had been out of their abusive relationship. There were several instruments that exist which could have been used, such as the one in *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders produced by the American Psychiatric Association, 1994*. However, the researcher designed a questionnaire specifically for this project.

Measurement

The objective for the questionnaire was to see if the clients were experiencing any feelings, thoughts, and/or emotions that may be a result of the aftereffects or trauma of their domestic violence encounters. The questionnaire consisted of 21 yes/no responses with the exception of Question Number 2. Questions 1 through 3 were background information on the client. Questions 4 through 20 were symptomatic to the aftereffects of domestic violence. The final question dealt with previous counseling.

To legally and ethically protect the client, the researcher as well as United Theological Seminary, two different consents forms were given to each client. The first was an Informed Consent Form for Participation and the second was A Recording Consent Form. [See Appendix D and Appendix B]

The purpose of the study was explained to each client. The researcher designed two consent forms for the clients. Upon signing the consent forms a copy was given to the client and one was kept for the researcher's file.

The second consent form is a recording consent form for interviews. This form contains a "summary explaining the project, faculty/sponsor signature, use of the interview, confidentiality, and disposition of the notes and recording (archive)."¹²

Once the questionnaires, interviews and group meetings were completed and the audio/visual aids were viewed the data analysis process began. As the data was reviewed repeatedly patterns and themes began to emerge. The researcher began categorizing and coding the data. The most significant patterns were as follows: the lack of awareness that domestic violence had an impact on their children; evidence of low self-esteem; the relief that they expressed in sharing their stories; and the lack of involvement in another intimate relationship.

Since qualitative research is a naturalistic inquiry there has to be a way of proving its validity. "Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the conventional criteria for research studies, internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity are not criteria applicable to naturalistic (qualitative) inquiry. They propose four alternative criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as more appropriate for research based in a qualitative method."¹³

¹² Amanda Udis-Kessler, "Human Subjects Research, Informed Consent and the Consent Form" *Consent Form Requirements at Colorado College*, Internet; www.coloradocollege.edu/dean/oir/irb/consentforms.htm. (Accessed 18 September 2006).

¹³ Jackie Baston, "Data Planning and Analysis" (Lecture, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH, January 22-26, 2007).

The credibility of this ministry project was satisfied through in-depth interviewing. Each client gave a recorded interview that was very descriptive with details. Transferability through triangulation of the data collected validated the research. For example on the questionnaire some clients indicated their belief that their children were affected by the domestic violence. During the taped interview they went into detail as to their concern for their children. In the stage play, *Never Say Never* that was shown and the 20/20 interview with Diane Sawyer, the issue of the children was a major concern.

The ministry project was also validated by confirmability. The researcher confirmed the analysis with members of the focus group, the professional associates, and the context associates as well as outside readers which included a social worker who offered additional information. The researcher, as an ethnographer, used her intellect and intuition to view and review the data from the questionnaires, the recorded interviews, the audio/visual aids and through observation. This was important to the process of confirming the reliability of the data because there was verbal and non-verbal responses that were taken into consideration. The results of the field experience will be given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Context and Professional Associates

The Context Associates, Mr. Leon Plump, Mrs. Bertha Freeman, and Mrs. Patricia O'Bannon are key leaders in the church which is serving as the context for this project. Because of the nature of the project, confidentiality was one of the determining factors in the selection of the Context Associates. The researcher has the utmost confidence in the Context Associates selected because of previous experience in working with them. They were eager to serve in whatever capacity needed. Their moral support and prayers were greatly appreciated.

Three Professional Associates were prayerfully and carefully selected by the researcher to be a part of the action research team. They committed themselves to provide both advice and encouragement. They were easily accessible because like the researcher, they are members of the Michigan-Indiana Region of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The Professional Associates all serve as pastors and are key leaders within the denomination. The Rev. Dr. Barbara L. Delaney and the Rev. Dr. Phillip D. Washington are recent graduates of the United Theological Seminary Doctoral Studies Program.

The Rev. Dr. Barbara L. Delaney graduated in 2001 with a concentration in Church Growth. Throughout the process of this project she has provided spiritual direction and professional advice. Church growth can be one of the benefits of this particular ministry project. Throughout the first century, the church grew because of the liberation and empowerment which was preached by the early church leaders. The expertise of Rev. Dr. Delaney has shown the researcher how to use this ministry project not only for education, liberation and empowerment, but also as an opportunity for church growth.

The Rev. Dr. Phillip D. Washington pastors the first C.M.E. Church founded in Detroit, Michigan. He graduated from United Theological Seminary in 2000 with a concentration in Social Justice. His focus is creating spiritual organizations and coalitions against institutionalized segregation and racism. His passion for social change inspired the researcher throughout the process of gathering data. He consistently encouraged the researcher to persevere and stay the course.

The Rev. Dr. Essie Clark-George received her doctorate from McCormack Theological Seminary of Chicago, Illinois in 1996. Her concentration is in the area of urban revitalization. Her certification in geriatrics, obtained in 2003 from the University of Chicago, is what attracted the researcher. For this project, the Rev. Dr. Clark-George was able to provide invaluable information on elderly abuse in skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation centers, assisted living and senior citizen dwellings. Human beings, regardless of their ages, are created in the image and likeness of God. Abuse is unacceptable at any age. Those who fall prey are to be protected and educated as to how to overcome.

The contributions made to this project by the Context Associates and the Professional Associates are priceless. The full extent of the researcher's gratitude will be expressed in the acknowledgement section of this document.

Collection of Data

There are several methods that can be used to collect data for a qualitative research project. For this particular ministry model the triangulation of methods consisting of observation, interviews and a focus group were used. The collection of data through observation required the researcher to listen and to see what was going on within and around the context. Since the researcher serves as the pastor of the Fewes Memorial C.M.E. Church she had been hearing for sometime about domestic violence that had taken place. It was even reported to her that a previous pastor abused his wife.

In recent years many incidents of domestic violence have made the news. It was therefore not too hard to hear discussions about it within the context. The behavior of some women was noticed during these conversations. Some of the women were adamantly against domestic violence when some others were indifferent. On one occasion a women commented that domestic violence was a private affair between the parties involved. Ironically she is one of the clients of the project.

Data was also collected by interviews. During interviews, "information is collected by talking with and listening to people. Interviews range on a continuum from those which are tightly structured (as in a survey) to those what are free-flowing and

conversational.”¹ Once the five participants were chosen for the project, individual interviews were given.

The objective of the interview was to allow the researcher to hear the extent of the client’s domestic violence experience. Another objective was to allow the client to give voice to her experience. It was the plan of the researcher for the interviews to be structured but once they began she realized that the free-flowing method was more applicable for this type of project. These interviews were tape recorded which allowed the researcher to listen later with more intent. It was beneficial to have the interviews recorded because listening to the women’s stories was an awe struck experience. Listening to them again allowed the researcher to hear them more objectively.

Prior to the actual interview the client was given an entrance questionnaire. The objective of this questionnaire was to verify whether the client was experiencing any after effects of domestic violence and if so, to what degree.

During the interviews the body language and the facial expressions of the women were observed. When some of the women talked about certain aspects of their experience they indicated by their movements and expressions that the subject brought on some discomfort. The inflection of their voices was also observed. The researcher therefore had to use intuition and discernment as to determine the depth of the interview. Generally the clients were willing to go as far as they needed to go.

The third method of collecting data was through the formation of a focus group. Five participants were prayerfully selected to serve as members of the focus group. The objective of the group was to allow the participants to become comfortable in sharing

¹ Jackie Baston, “Data Planning and Analysis” (Lecture, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH, January 22-26, 2007).

their experiences with those who may not have known about their abuse. It was also thought to be helpful in letting the clients know that they were not alone in their experiences. The focus group meetings were conducted by the researcher and held at her home. This was done because the church building was felt to be too formal of a setting. In the qualitative approach, it is necessary for the participants to be involved and that a rapport is established between the researcher and the participants. Because of the sensitivity of this particular project, it is essential for the participants to be in a relaxed atmosphere during times of discussions. A journal was kept of the group sessions and the final session was taped recorded.

Analysis of Data

Entrance Questionnaire

The Entrance questionnaire, containing questions associated with the after effects of domestic violence, was given to the client when she arrived for the personal interview. The twenty-one question entrance questionnaire required Yes and No responses, with the exception of question number two. [See Appendix A] When the first client began filling out the questionnaire, a problem arose. At that point the researcher realized that she should have had a response of “sometimes” and a space for comments. She therefore told the participants if they had a comment to please write it out to the side of the response. The researcher then left the participant alone to fill the questionnaire. The following are the dates that the participants completed the questionnaire and were interviewed:

Client #1	February 15, 2007
Client #2	February 19, 2007
Client #3	February 21, 2007
Client #4	March 1, 2007
Client #5	March 12, 2007

Due to medical reasons, Client #4 had to complete her questionnaire and be interviewed at her home. The original Client #5 could not be a part of the project because of a busy schedule. Another woman was selected to serve as the client. She was guided through her questionnaire and consent forms because of her Spanish speaking background, although she commands English quite well. The Exit questionnaire was administered during the last session held on June 2, 2007. [See Appendix F]

The following are the results to the answers to the Entrance questionnaire. The time period in which the participants had been out of their abusive relationships ranges from one to 4 years to over ten years. Three of the five participants had been out of their abusive relationship for over ten years.

Four out of 5 participants had children by their abuser. One out of the 5 participants grew up in an abusive home. Four out of the 5 participants entered into other abusive relationships following their first domestic violence experience. However, all 5 of the participants say that there were no similarities between the old relationships as compared to the new one.

Question seven was, "Are you easily frightened or jumpy?" Two participants answered yes; 2 said no; and 1 client responded with sometimes. The same responses

were given to the question about visualizing or having unwanted thoughts about their domestic violence experience. Two out of the 5 participants had dreams or nightmares about the abuse or their abuser. Four of the 5 participants are bothered when they watch movies or see re-enactments of domestic violence and abuse.

Three out of 5 participants said that when they see their abuser or someone who resembles him that they get sweaty palms, a fast heart rate or get nervous. Four of the participants express that they had no problem with talking about their abuse. All 5 participants say that they can talk about all of their domestic violence experience.

None of the participants felt shame about what they went through. Four out of 5 participants feel that the abuse was not their fault. The remaining client has had several abusive relationships and feels that the last one was her fault because she should have known better.

All of the participants stated that they had forgiven their abuser. One client says that she chooses to be alone as oppose to being around others. She did however comment that since she has been coming to church she feels better about being around others. One client said that she used alcohol or narcotics to dull the pain of her abuse. Suicidal thoughts were considered by one of the participants. Four participants never received formal counseling for their domestic violence experience. When the client finished the questionnaire, she was given the consent forms.

Consent Forms

Two consent forms were given to the participants to be signed and dated. All five of the participants agreed to be participants and signed the consent forms. The purpose of the consent forms was explained. A copy was given to the participants and the researcher

kept one for her records. The researcher's copies are held in a secure box at her home. The first form is an Informed Consent Form for Participation. [See Appendix D]

The second form was the Recording Consent Form. After the completion of the consent forms the researcher advised the client of the purpose and the procedure for the taped interview. [See Appendix B]

Taped Interview

It was explained to the client that the cassette tape recording would be transcribed by someone who was not a part of the context and that the tapes would be stored and later disposed of according to the guidelines of the seminary.

The interview was to be based upon the questionnaire to allow the researcher control over the interview. To the surprise of the researcher, the interviews did not follow the structured prepared questions because of each client's need to share her story. The participant's stories are as follows:

Client #1-February 15, 2007

Client #1 is a 44 year old mother of two teenagers, a boy and a girl. She was very open and nervously started talking the moment she came into the home of the researcher. She referred to her abuser as a sperm donor that was on crack. She said, "Emotional wounds are the deepest," even though she still carries a bullet in her left buttocks. Her abuse started when she was 27 years old, prior to her becoming pregnant with her son a year later. Being pregnant did not stop the abuse. As she was sharing she began remembering things that she had not thought about for a long time.

One of the traits of those who are dealing with the after effects of domestic violence is the ability to forget things they do not want to remember. She shared that she had an appointment at the clinic but she never made it to the doctor's office, where she was employed. Her abuser thought that she was planning to meet the man who gave her a glance as she was getting ready to go in. She was threatened to be beaten and left alone. Client #1 never knew when her abuser was going to attack. Life for a victim of domestic violence is the feeling of walking on egg shells because the victim tries to keep the abuser from attacking.

During the course of her interview, Client #1 referred to herself as being or acting stupid five different times. I wondered if this one of the adjectives that her abuser used to describe her. The victim of a domestic violence situation is usually called out of their name over and over again until it is internalized. This is why self esteem has to be restored.

After a beating at the abuser's parent's home, the client took refuge in the home of her biological father who lived in another state. She soon returned to Michigan and moved in with her abuser. This is a pattern among victims; they return to what they are accustomed. The client remembers keeping a sledge hammer underneath their bed and thought about using it on her abuser but she was too afraid.

Client #1 shared many incidents but the following account was most shocking to the researcher. The client and her abuser had gone to the home of a friend of his. This home was nothing more than a shack. The client could not determine whether the friend was male or female. Everybody in the house, with the exception of the client, was taking drugs. Her abuser had recently bought a gun and had it with him. He kept taunting her

about having an ATM card that she did not tell him about. Accusations were being hurled at her. He then shot her in the left knee but the bullet exited. The abuser proceeded to shoot her two more times in the knees. Each time he would turn the music up loud. The song that was playing was "Trust in God, Always." This was a song that she used to sing as a duet with her sister.

All the while this is taking place, the abuser kept asking the client, "What do you want me to get the kids to wear?" He then asked her, "What do you want to wear?" She realized later that he was referring to the attire for her funeral. They stayed at the house all night long until her abuser said he was tired, wanted to get the kid who were at her mother's house, and go home.

The client was afraid to go to the police. When they got home the abuser ran bath water for her and asked, "Why did you make me do this to you?" She poured Epsom salt into the water as her daughter asked, "What happened to you?" The client told her seven year old daughter that her daddy had shot her. The researcher could only imagine what went through the mind of that little girl and how it affected her. There is a trend that if a child is in an abusive home, they will either become the abuser or the abused.

It was not until sometime later that the eyes of the client were opened. Her abuser started using the children to humiliate her. When her children came home from school, the abuser would have them call the client on her job and say, "Hey Bitch, I'm home." This would be repeated several times with the abuser then coming on the line.

The client finally told her mother that she had been shot several times. With the help of a family friend the client eluded her abuser and went to the police station. The police said that the wounds were too old. However she had a wound from the night

before where the abuser had broken a glass on her leg. The officers asked her, "What was her abuser's name? When she gave them his name they became very interested because there was a warrant out for his arrest. She gave them his location but she feared because the children were with him. When the officers entered the house, the abuser attempted to pick up their son but the officers were able to subdue him. He said he was merely picking up his son to give him a hug. He was taken to jail in October 1999. While he was incarcerated, Client #1 received permission to marry him. The marriage was never consummated because the client divorced him upon his release in 2004.

Client #1 only communicates with her ex-husband in reference to the children. Her son expresses that he wants his father in his life. Her daughter has no respect for her father and has threatened him that if he tries to hurt her mother again, somebody is going to die.

Client #2 -February 19, 2007

Client #2 is a 56 old mother of three adult children, one son and two daughters. She was the most difficult for the researcher in deciding whether Client #2 should be a participant. Her husband mentally abused her from the age of nineteen up until the time he had a stroke in 1996. The stroke not only affected his physical ability but it totally altered his personality, whereas he is more subdued and kind.

Client #2 experienced domestic violence as a teenager at the age of sixteen. Her first abuser is now deceased and not the father of her children. He was homeless and she would allow him to sleep in their basement. When her mother found out, she permitted him to continue to sleep there. Client #2 and her boyfriend would have sex in vacant apartment buildings. The abuse would happen during sex.

She kept a diary of her experiences and her youngest brother found it and showed it to their mother. Client #2's mother kept a close eye on her by taking her to the daily bingo games. Therefore when the client's boyfriend came around, she was nowhere to be found. He moved on and she met and married her husband at age nineteen.

The mental abuse began immediately. It is a tendency for victims of domestic violence to enter into another violent relationship until the pattern is broken. Client #2 explained how her husband controlled and accused her of having affairs. He also used the children against her by not feeding them when she was at work nor changed their diapers. He would not let her visit with her family with the children. The client says that she has experienced two nervous breakdowns since the marriage.

When Client #2 entered the researcher's home, her conversation was immediately about her children. One daughter is currently in an abusive relationship. The researcher finds that the client's attitude toward her daughter is perplexing. The client expressed that she does not want to hear about her daughter's domestic violence situation anymore. When asked why, the client was rather adamant. The client feels that because she has talked with her daughter and so has the researcher, that the daughter should leave her abuser. The researcher agrees about the leaving but thinks that the client should be more understanding about the situation.

The other daughter is a lesbian who was in a domestic violence relationship with another woman. She has since left that relationship. To the researcher, this is evidence that domestic violence can go from generation to generation.

Client #2's husband comes from a violent home. She says that her husband's father had eleven children by his wife and six by his wife's sister. The extent of the violence will be discussed by Client #3 who is the niece of Client #2's husband.

Client #3 -February 21, 2007

Client #3 is the youngest in the focus group. She is 39 years old with a teenage son and daughter by her abuser. She was eighteen when she moved in with her abuser and that's when the physical and mental abuse began. Fights happened when her boyfriend would get drunk. She left the relationship in 2005.

The client did not want to tell her family because she says she was in denial and wanted to protect him. She told her mother and other family members also knew of the abuse. Her boyfriend would apologize and promise not to do it again. The situation waned but soon afterwards the abuse would start again.

Client #3 informed me that her mother was abused by boyfriends that she would bring to the house. The children heard the fights even though they pretended to be asleep. The client says that she think it is a "generational curse." Many of her mother's brothers and sisters experienced abuse.

The researcher asked, "What relationship is Client #2 to you?" She said that Client #2's husband is her mother's uncle, her grandfather's son. She said that her uncle was also abused. Client #3 says that her abuser's mother was abused by his father and the client's boyfriend was a witness. The client also says that all of her boyfriend's siblings are abusers. The boyfriend was also abused by his biology teacher. Again the researcher could not help but to conclude that abuse beget abuse.

Client #3's children also witnessed the abuse of her boyfriend toward her. Her son was eight or nine years old while her daughter was either three or four years old. She says that her children had been affected by the abuse. She says that her son, now 21 years old, says that he will never be like his daddy and that he will be a gentleman. Her son is protective of her; he intervened between his mother and father. She says that both of her children were nervous during the time of the abuse.

Client #3 relies on her strong faith in God even though she has since then been in another controlling relationship of which she ended. Just like Client #1, she feels that if she had stayed with her children's father, someone would have been killed because they both had guns. At the time of the interview, she expresses guilt for having stayed in the relationship for so long.

Client #4 March 1, 2007

Client #4 is a 58 year old mother of two daughters. The researcher had to go to the home to the client to get the personal interview because of medical reasons. It was a little uncomfortable for everybody because the client's eleven year old granddaughter was there. The client spoke rather quietly, however the researcher was able to get the interview. The client's daughter came to pick up her child and the interview went more smoothly.

The client shared that when she was between 45 and 48 years old, a scene flashed before her eyes. The scene was that of her uncle, her mother's brother, getting off of her. After leaving work one day she went to the street where her family lived when she was a seven years old. She drove by the house and she knew that something had happened there.

Later that evening she called her oldest brother to ask him if he remembers anything about her and their uncle. Her brother says he remembers the uncle coming out of her room a couple of times when they were children but he did not know what happened inside. The youngest brother also heard the discussion and suggested that they tell their parents who were out working in the yard.

When the client's mother was asked about the situation she said nothing had happened. But the following day the client's mother called and said she knew that something had happened. The client reassured her mother that she was not planning to do anything to the uncle she just wanted to know the truth.

Client #4 shared that she and her mother has never been on good terms. The client said that her mother had a still born child before she was born. Her mother was always hard on her and did not encourage her. The mother often talked about the client's appearance and constantly told her that she would never be anything in life. The client is obese but she and the researcher are now members of Curves.

The client shared her experience with her pastor who advised her to visit her uncle. He was in the nursing home when she went to see him. He is paralyzed from the waist down. He was an alcoholic and has suffered a brain hemorrhage. When she saw the condition that he was in and the fact that his mind was not all there, she did not say anything to him about the abuse. She said that she knew in her spirit that she had forgiven him but she expressed that she never liked him. Her uncle is still in the nursing home and she does not go by often to see him.

Client #4's first husband was a physical abuser who came from a violent home. When the client's father found out about the abuse, he went after him. The client begged

her father not to kill her husband. Her father gave her a switch blade to carry so that “anything black and ashy that came toward her had better look out.” The marriage ended after six months. Her first husband was murdered.

The client married her second husband twice. He is the father of her children. She said that the relationship was going well until she found out that he was a homosexual. He did not physically abuse her but he verbally abused her. At this point the researcher wondered how the relationship could be going well when he was verbally abusing her. He later became a minister but there was some controversy about him and a member of the choir.

From that point on the client had several more relationships, notably with leaders in the church. Her last relationship was with the brother of an elder in the church. The brother was newly released from jail and the elder thought that the client would be somebody good for him. He verbally abused her by talking about her figure and using her financially. He went back to jail and the client has since cut off communication with him.

Client #4 is not in a relationship right now, even though she hopes to be someday. She says that she is waiting of God to send her someone. The unfortunate thing about this situation is that the client’s youngest daughter is in an abusive relationship. She shared this with the researcher after the project was complete. The client has offered her home to her daughter as a place of refuge.

Client #5 March 12, 2007

Client #5 is not the original person selected for the project. The original client said that she did not have time and lived too far away. The person selected is a 45 year old mother of five from St. Croix, Virgin Islands. Even though she gave the personal interview, she did not come back to participate in the focus group. That is most unfortunate because it is the researcher's summation that the client could have benefited from the group participation.

The client's marriage to her abuser is her second marriage. Her first marriage ended because of infidelity on her husband's part. Out of all of the other participants, Client #5 and her second husband are the only ones who received formal counseling as a couple. They went for four months. This was to no avail because the husband had an ulterior motive for marrying the client; he needed a permanent green card because he was from the Dominican Republic. When he got the ten year card, he began physically abusing the client. His getting the card took a succession of marriages. Unknowingly, the client was wife number five. They were married for eight years.

All of her children were born at the time of the abuse. Her husband is the father of her last two children. She tried not to provoke him or fight with him so she would walk away. Her ignoring him made him angrier and he would punch her in the back and catch her by the hair. He would leave the house and stay out all night. When he returned in the morning, he would tear off her night clothes and push his fingers in her vagina to see if she had been with another man. She did not share this with anyone; not even her older children who were there in the home.

The younger children, a son and daughter were aware of the abuse. The son slept in the same bedroom. At age three, he would say to the father, "Papito stop," but the father would tell him to shut up and go to sleep.

When they went to court to settle the green card issue, she discovered that he had a criminal record. The client explained to the court what had been going on, but since the laws were not as they are now, the officers told her that she had to go back home because he was her husband. The house that they lived in belonged to the client and she felt that she and her children had no where else to go; her husband should have left but he did not.

The violence escalated until she was admitted into the hospital. He was arrested and sentenced. The client came to the continental United States. After being released from jail, her husband was not allowed to travel because his green card had been taken away. The client talked with his sister and was told that her husband had been in some kind of fiery accident. He is alive but he is badly deformed.

To the researcher, Client #5 exemplifies having the most after effects. In November of 2006 she says that she and her oldest daughter had gone to the mall. She saw a man that looked like her ex-husband and she began running. Scenes of the abuse began flashing in her head. Before the researcher used the word trauma, the client explained her situation as traumatic. She shared so many other experiences which made her interview the longest of the participants.

Just as with the other participants, Client #5's children were affected by the domestic violence. When they left St. Croix and she would invite male friends to her home, the children would ask, "Are you going to beat our mommy?" The last relationship the client was in the man began shouting at the client. Her younger children

would intervene by letting both their mother and the friend know that they disapproved of the shouting. Her oldest son, while in St. Croix showed his displeasure by drawing pictures. The drawing was of a tall man and a little boy standing beside him. The little boy had a knife and was stabbing the man in the leg. His teacher had a social worker to go to the home to investigate whether something was happening. The client expressed that everything was fine. To this day she regrets having not told the truth. Her older son is now in the penal system and is also an abuser.

Following the interview, the client was informed that she will be meeting with four other women for three two hour group sessions that are based on scripture. She was given the date of the first group session.

The cassette tapes were given to a transcriber who is not associated with the context. The transcripts and the tapes were returned to the researcher.

Group Sessions

The first group session was scheduled for the evening of Thursday, April 26, 2007. One by one, excuses were given as to why they could not attend. Client #1 could not attend because she had to go to court with her son who had been arrested for driving without a license. Client #3 could not attend because of a previous engagement. The researcher was unable to contact Client #5. Both Clients #2 and #4 were in attendance.

The researcher did not share with the participants during their personal interviews as to who the members of the group would be. Most of the participants knew each other; Client #2 is the aunt of Client #3. Clients #3 and #4 did not know each other. Client #5 did not attend any of the group sessions. They were surprised to see each other because neither of them knew that the other had been abused.

The researcher proceeded with the prayer and welcome to her home. Colored pocket folders distributed to the participants in attendance. [See Appendix E] At the end of each session, the folders were returned to the researcher. The folders contained the session outline, an article for reading and discussion purposes, blank note paper, a responsive reading litany, and an evaluation form. [See Appendix C] The participants were also each provided a Bible, pen and pencil. The researcher kept a journal of each session.

The researcher discussed the purpose of the group meeting and explained the contents of the folder. A thorough explanation of the participant's anonymity was given due to the sensitive nature and relationship of participants as well as the sensitivity of the project.

A brief testimonial was given as to why each client was in attendance. It began with the researcher because she is also a survivor of domestic violence.

The qualitative researcher systematically reflects on who he or she is in the inquiry and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study. This introspection and acknowledgment of biases, values, and interest (or reflexivity) typifies qualitative research today. The personal-self becomes inseparable from the researcher-self. It also represents honesty and openness to research, acknowledging that all inquiry is laden with values.²

The researcher allowed two of the participants more than the allotted time because they were the only ones in attendance. A level of trust had to be established between these two women even though they knew each other. They did not know each other from a

² John W. Creswell, *Research Design; Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2003), 182.

domestic violence perspective. The researcher noticed the tensed expressions on the faces of the participants. As the evening grew, the tenseness left.

The topic of discussion was given which was relevant to the passages of scripture that were assigned. After silent reflection and a break, the three study questions were discussed. The role play did not take place because time was running out and the article had not been read. The article is entitled, *If I Could Close My Eyes: A story of love, pain, hope, and release* by Abigail R. Esman. The remainder of the session proceeded as planned; however the session lasted three hours instead of two. The session evaluation form was to be filled by the participants and left in their folders. Sessions two and three also went beyond the planned time. The participants had no problem with staying later. Session two was attended by four participants and the final session was attended by 3. The final session had to be postponed twice because of scheduling problems. The group sessions closed with each client praying and rejoicing. The following were the schedules for the sessions:

Session 1 (Thursday, April 26, 2007; 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.):

Topic: Overcoming After Effects

Session 2 (Monday, April 30, 2007; 7:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.):

Topic: Discovering You by Trusting God

Session 3 (Saturday, June 2, 2007; 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.):

Topic: Sharing My Story. This session was recorded.

Outcomes

Exit Questionnaire

The Exit Questionnaire consisted of ten questions requiring a yes/no/sometimes response. Questions nine and ten required an explanation for the answer given. Even though Client #1 did not attend the last session, she completed the Exit Questionnaire at a later date. The following is the outcome of the Exit Questionnaire:

All of the participating clients said that they would recommend this ministry to their family and friends. They all said that they would participate in a ministry to help victims and survivors of domestic violence. Two of the four participants said that they would be interested in learning how to facilitate the ministry. One client said no because of her work schedule and her own ministry. One client said that she would be interested in learning to facilitate sometimes.

Three out of 4 of the participants said that they are able to talk with their abuser about the domestic violence. One client said all of her abusers, except one, are deceased. She said she does not want to even see the abuser that is living. All of the participants said that they are able to talk with their children about their domestic violence experience.

Two of the 4 participants said that they think that they are ready for another relationship. One of the participants is married. The remaining client says that she is not sure about another relationship and is waiting to hear from God. With the exception of the married client, the remaining participants said that they are not currently in a relationship.

Question eight, a follow-up of question seven is, "If you are in a relationship, do you make decisions concerning the relationship. Only the married client could answer that question and she says that she does make decisions concerning the relationship.

Question nine required an explanation of the answer given by the participants. Three out of the 4 participants said that they were happy with themselves. One client says that, "I don't feel bad about myself anymore. I can love me if nobody else does." Another client says that she loves herself because of Jesus. The next client says that she loves herself because, "I am taking the word of God to complete myself. I am seeking His kingdom." The final client says she loves herself sometimes. When asked to explain her response she said, "I'm not sure."

The last question asked is, "Are you more aware of your feelings when involved in decision making with your children and others?" This question also required an explanation for the response given. The question was evidently confusing because all of the participants had questions as to what the question meant. It was explained to them that one of the tendencies of survivors of domestic violence is that they put everybody else's feelings before their own. The reasoning for the question was better understood. All four of the participants answered, yes. One client said she answered yes because, "I got to look out for myself because if I don't, nobody else will." Another client answered yes and says, "Both sides should be considered; however I don't want to be more concerned about them. I am not a door mat." The next client says, "I try to meet the needs of others and try to do what's best. I have learned to think about me and I feel better." The final client did not give an explanation.

Implementation of the Methodology

The phenomenon of the after effects of domestic violence has yet to be explored. There are many areas of a woman's life and those of the lives surrounding her that can be affected by the abuse. The data that was collected was implemented and used in several ways. First, the data collected from the Entrance questionnaire helped to determine whether the women in the context of Few's Memorial C.M.E. Church, who are survivors of domestic violence, are experiencing after effects. Their responses indicated that they could be experiencing reactions that are symptomatic of women who have been traumatized by being abused.

The taped recorded interviews were most helpful in the process of choosing the topics of discussion for the focus group sessions. The data collected was also helpful in deciding whether to use an article, movie/play, or some other audio/visual tool. These tools were to hopefully incite discussion and to help the women realize that what they are experiencing, others have experienced as well. Also, the women were observed by the researcher to see to what degree they are still being affected by the abuse.

The group sessions afforded the clients the opportunity to witness that they were not alone in their experience within their context. Their reactions as to who were participants in the project with them created a sense of ease. The process proved most effective once they got over the embarrassment and began trusting each other with their deepest emotions and feelings.

Throughout the process of gathering and analyzing the data the issue of self-esteem was quite evident. In all of the cases the clients expressed their love for their husbands or significant others. "Since most women derive pride and self-esteem from

their capacity to sustain relationships, the batterer is often able to entrap his victim by appealing to her most cherished values. It is not surprising, therefore, that battered women are often persuaded to return after trying to flee from their abusers.”³

All of the clients were ridiculed and criticized by their abusers which are key factors in tearing down woman’s self-esteem. She is demeaned by words that are hurtful and unforgettable. When a woman has low self-esteem she becomes doubtful of her abilities and therefore does not reach her full potential as it relates to jobs or careers, relationship with others, reaching goals and relating to their children. Women with low self-esteem are generally:

- Convinced of their worthlessness
- Full of feelings of insignificance
- Unsure of their abilities
- Likely to stick with the easy and familiar
- Uncomfortable with praise
- Fearful and unsure about the future
- Perfectionist to extremes
- Paralyzed by fear
- Blind to new opportunities⁴

The Exit questionnaire gave some insight as to the possibilities of the effectiveness of the group sessions. It was hoped that some changes would occur in the women’s attitude and how they now think of themselves. Even though the questionnaire indicates that a change took place it is difficult to determine the significance of the change. The researcher could not help but wonder whether the responses given were their true feelings or were they caught up in the moment of the finality of the project.

³ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of Violence-From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 83.

⁴ Don R. Powell and American Institute for Preventive Medicine, *Minding Your Mental Health*, Section II – Mental Health Topics, www.uaf.edu/chc/MentalHealth/SelfEsteem.htm (Accessed 2 October 2007).

Some of the clients indicated that they would be interested in facilitating or serving in a leadership role in the ministry once it is implemented. The researcher feels that it will be necessary to offer additional training especially to those who are survivors of domestic violence who had low self-esteem issues. "Self-esteem depends on having relationships with others in which we are neither overly engaged nor overly distant. Connecting with others helps us foster self-esteem, while withdrawing from relationships undermines self-esteem and sets us up to be victims of our own negative inner life and negative internalizations."⁵

The implementation of the data collected also confirms the urgency and the necessity of this particular kind of ministry model. The process of gleaning the data can easily be adapted to help other ministry leaders to design a model relevant to the need in their particular context.

⁵ Edward P. Wimberly, *Recalling Our Own Stories: Spiritual Renewal for Religious Caregivers* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 64-65.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The doctoral program at United Theological Seminary is an instrument of the Holy Spirit to help guide and shape Godly leaders to be effective in a society that is plagued by a myriad of issues. Writing the Spiritual Autobiography awakened *Sleeping Beauty* from her long nap. It was during that time of writing that the researcher realized what her project's topic should be.

As the doctoral program progressed, one had to dig deeper and deeper within oneself to get at the root of their ministry that has been placed there by God. It may not be understood as to why one's roots consist of what it does but there is a responsibility to nurture it so that it may grow into a fruit bearing tree. Initially, the root of the domestic violence issue's affect on congregations was not understood but at the end of the project's implementation, fruit was borne.

When the actual research for this project began there was a glimpse of an idea as to the direction it would take. The starting point was expected to be dealing with the aftereffects of domestic violence and moving onward towards a healing finish. As a survivor of domestic violence it was not an easy journey since time and space had shielded the issue behind walls of protection. The detours along that journey were not only surprising to the members of the focus group; it was surprising to the researcher.

The first surprise came when the topic of domestic violence emerged in various conversations throughout the context and beyond. It was overwhelming how much domestic violence was prevalent at Fews Memorial C.M.E. Church. It was also alarming and comforting for the researcher to know that there are organizations and individuals who are ready to speak out against the crime of domestic violence. It was alarming to the researcher because she was not aware of the programs and agencies that exist that are advocates for the cause of domestic violence. On the other hand there are still not enough agencies and churches with their doors open for this cause.

Relatives and friends of victims informed the researcher of their knowledge of their loved ones' abuse. Victims and survivors began to come out of the woodwork which made it easy to select those who would be a part of the ministry model. Since ministries are created out of a need, the participants' stories helped to shape the project.

It is startling for pastors to serve congregations and not realize who it is they are serving. In a situation such as domestic violence the alarm however is not that surprising. Although there have been great leaps in addressing domestic violence a degree of secrecy still looms over the issue.

It was that air of secrecy that caused the researcher to wonder, how much of their stories would the group members share? How much of the researcher's story should be told, after all she was their pastor. These questions were answered the moment the first woman arrived for the one-on-one interview. The first client, as with the other four participants came in ready to tell her story

The testimonies of Clients #1 and #5 were the most astounding to the researcher. Both of them are members of where the researcher serves as the pastor of Fews Memorial

C.M.E. Church. Client #1 was a member when the researcher was assigned as the pastor three years ago and #5 joined under the leadership of the researcher.

As Client #1 began to share her testimony during the personal interview, the researcher wanted to cry. Since the client was not crying the researcher held back the tears. The client's courage and willingness to share convinced the researcher that the project could possibly make an impact upon the lives of the clients.

Out of all of the clients who participated, Client #1 impacted the researcher the most. Her story was the researcher's story. There were so many similarities. Both were about the same age when they started having children with the son being born first. The client was not initially married to her abuser but the researcher was married. Even though the client endured abuse when they were not married, she in turned married him after he was incarcerated. To the researcher that meant that the client returned to him. The researcher made a similar move of remarrying her abuser after divorcing him. Both the researcher and the client had a strong Christian musical background. It was through the music that revelation came as to the need for change.

One of the temptations for the researcher was to join in with the clients by telling them her story. At some points during the interviews and sessions, it was appropriate for her to share. She had to remind herself however, that this was not about her even though some of their stories were her story. The focus of the interviews and the sessions had to be about healing and not an anti-men party.

Client #5 had a thick Spanish accent which caused the researcher to have to listen intently to what was being said. The client had shared on another occasion, prior to the project, about some of her experiences. She accompanied the researcher who was invited

to speak at the Detroit District's Social Concern Program. As God would have it that particular program's focus was domestic violence. The researcher was encouraged to share some of her abuse experience. The client had to be comforted during the presentation and she later shared that she is a survivor of domestic violence.

During the course of the project, confirmation came to the researcher that the ministry model needs to be implemented in our communities. On Sunday, March 4, 2007, the plans of the researcher were to visit the various Sunday school classes of the context. Her plans were interrupted when a member of the church brought a young lady into her office. Sharon (not her real name) was crying and thankful that the doors were open. She had just been attacked by her best friend who lived across the street from the church. Sharon said that Brent (not his real name) was following her and that she was terrified that he was going to do her harm.

While in the office, the researcher shared part of her story and assured Sharon that she was safe. The researcher put some of the men of the church on alert because there had just been a recent incident of a domestic violence dispute that led to a shooting in a Detroit church. The researcher then encouraged Sharon to call the police but Sharon's reply was that she did not want to bring shame to her family. Sharon was encouraged to stay for the worship service and during the service she had a traumatized stare in her eyes. After the service the researcher took Sharon to her aunt's home. The incident left a haunting feeling in the soul of the researcher. She thought that she would never see Sharon again but Sharon came to the church the following Tuesday to thank the researcher. Sharon's story made for good conversation during the group sessions. It allowed the group to express their feelings about hearing of women who are still involved

in abusive relationships. During the one of the sessions, the group viewed a CD of a musical production on domestic violence.

The researcher observed the reactions of the clients as they visualized the abuse they had experienced. The comments and reactions were indicative of those who had experienced domestic violence. It captivated their attention and afterwards they shared with each other what had happened to them. A similar reaction happened during another session as the clients listened to a 20/20 television program on domestic violence.¹

The final session was rewarding to the researcher and the clients. After the session the clients in attendance began sharing some closing thoughts about what they had experienced from their weeks together. Client #4 said, "I know that this is the last session but this is the last time that I will have to deal with my domestic violence experience." She expressed this because she had been in many abusive relationships which began with her uncle attacking her at seven years old. Client #4 said that she realizes that she does not have to settle for anybody. She feels that it is important for a woman to get to know herself before getting involved in another relationship. Having a relationship with Jesus Christ has now become a priority with her. She expressed appreciation for the scriptures that were given during the sessions.

Another revelation that she had is that one can not pick someone up and get them out of a domestic violence situation. The researcher agreed with her that the one being abuse has to get tired of the situation. The client asked the question, "How does a person beat another human being like that?" The researcher explained to her that the perpetrator has his target. It is unfortunate that the target is someone who is closes to him. The

¹ Susan Still, "Domestic Violence Interview" interviewed by Diane Sawyer, 20/20, ABC Television, (27 October 2006).

perpetrator does not beat his boss nor abuse his neighbor yet he hurts the one who loves him. It was resolved that the perpetrator must be held accountable for his actions.

As the conversation continued the researcher recited the old adage, “If you do the crime; you must do the time” was an appropriate action for a perpetrator. For Christians forgiveness must be granted to those who ask for forgiveness if they repent. Forgiveness is more than just a bandage on a deep wound. There must be some thought given to forgiveness for the perpetrator and the one who has been abused. All of the clients said that they have forgiven their perpetrators. The researcher does not doubt that but after learning more and more about forgiveness she wonders was it given too soon.

Also in that final conversation the clients expressed appreciation for being able to give voice to their experience. They agreed with the researcher that one can not get through the trauma of domestic violence by themselves. Client #3 stated that she knew of two prostitutes on the streets of River Rouge who were being abused by their pimp and their solicitors. She said that if this ministry existed, those prostitutes could have somewhere to go so that they can talk about what they are going through. The client’s enthusiasm was so strong that the researcher thought that the client was going to leave the session to go get the prostitutes. That was definitely one of the attitudes the researcher was hoping to invoke throughout the implementation of the ministry model. The idea of the project was for women who were once bound by the chains of domestic violence to be set free. In their freedom they would in turn reach back to help another *sister to rise up*.

A Different Approach

There were a few things that the researcher sees that could be done differently to help the ministry model be more effective. First, the program would be extended to at least ten to twelve sessions. If the four sessions that were completed, including the personal interviews, had such an impact on the clients, just imagine the impact if there had been more sessions.

The topics discussed during the project were “Overcoming the Aftereffects of Being Abused,” “Discovering You by Trusting in God,” and “Sharing Your Story.” While researching the project many more areas for discussion were discovered. All of the topics could not be included in a period of 10 to 12 weeks. It was therefore important for the ministry leader to have an idea as to what topics would be relevant and provide immediate gratification to the group. This is where the personal interviews became paramount.

Today, there are some ministry models that exist that may be useful tools during future group sessions. The one designed by Edward S. Kubany, Mari A. McCaig and Janet R. Laconsay was very inspirational for the researcher.² *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence: A Workbook for Women* is a book written for those who are suffering from the aftereffects of having been physically and/or psychologically abused by your husband, boyfriend, or other intimate partner.³

The aftereffects of domestic violence are real and should be very much a part of treatment as getting a victim out of danger. The researcher had to dig deep under the

² Edward S. Kuban, Mari A. McCaig and Janet R. Laconsay, *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence: A Workbook for Women* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2004).

rubble of domestic violence resources to discover that there are writers and researchers who also understand the importance of dealing with the trauma of domestic violence. The surface has just been scratched.

During the research it was discovered that not only are the women victims but the children are too. Unfortunately abuse goes from generation to generation. Along with treatment and therapy for the women there should be a platform where the children can receive similar treatment and therapy. This phenomenon could perhaps help to explain why so many of our teenagers are accepting abusive behavior and calling it love.

Another aspect of domestic violence is the pattern of getting involved in other abusive relationships. It is ironic that women who survive one domestic violence relationship may get involved with another. That happened with some of the clients in the group. In one case it was one relationship after another. This is one aspect of the issue that could really be investigated more.

One thought that resonated throughout the project is that healing can not take place in solitude. The lesson was learned from Tamar in 2 Samuel 13. She became alone and desolate. Empowerment and transformation can only take place with the help of others. There were times during the group sessions that when the women saw that one of the women was struggling through an issue, they rallied around her and encouraged her.

The most rewarding discovery made by the researcher during the course of the project is that women really want to talk about their experiences. But even as this sentence is being written the researcher not only feels that it was the women wanting to talk more so than them wanting to be heard. It is liberating to be able to communicate

³ Ibid., 1.

one with another. As the clients shared during the personal interview and during the group sessions they began to take on what Patty LaBelle calls a new attitude.

When starting the research the desire was to be able to say in the end that the model was a success with empowered and transformed lives. It is the belief of the researcher that transformation did however take place in each of the lives of the clients. The degree of the transformation varies. Each of the women indicated through the evaluation forms and the Exit questionnaire that the model was helpful to them. It is known that individuals who fill evaluation forms may be affected by the one who is seeking the information. After all, the researcher does serve as their pastor. The forms are important to the process of evaluation but the researcher sees these women on a regular basis. They talk freely about how they enjoyed the time shared during the project. Not only are they talking about it but they want to help the women in the community of whom they know are hurting. To the researcher, that is empowerment and transformation.

This ministry model can be utilized within the context of a shelter. A shelter is designed for temporary housing until other means are made available. They address the immediate needs and provide safety. It is the hope of the researcher that during this protective time that the victims and survivors are educated on how to deal with the aftereffects which are not felt until sometimes years later. Because of the delay in some aftereffects they can not be addressed during the initial trauma. However, it is the belief of the researcher that if the survivor is educated on the issue of aftereffects they will be more able to deal with them sooner.

APPENDIX A

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE QUESTIONNAIRE

Domestic Violence and Abuse Questionnaire

Questions	Answers			Comments
1. Are you still intimately involved with your abuser?	0	5	0	
2. How long have you been out of that intimate relationship?		1	1	
3. Do you have children with the abuser?	3	1	0	2 Yes,
4. Did you grow up in an abusive home?	1	5	0	# 4, My uncle, #3 For a minute
5. Have you been in another intimate relationship with someone other than the abuser?	4	1	0	
6. If you answered YES to question 5, are there any similarities between him and your abuser?		5		
7. Are you easily frightened or jumpy?	2	2	1	
8. Do you visualize or have unwanted thoughts about your abusive relationship?	2	2	1	
9. Do you have dreams or nightmares about the abuse or the abuser?	2	3	0	
10. Does it bother you to watch movies or see re-enactments of domestic violence and abuse?	4	1	0	#1, I get real angry.
11. When you see your abuser or someone who resembles him, do you get sweaty palms, fast heart rate or nervous?	2	3	0	
12. Do you avoid talking about your abusive relationship?	1	4	0	
13. Even though you may share some of your experience, is there still something that you cannot or choose not to talk about?	0	5	0	
14. Do you feel shame about what happened to you?	0	5	0	
15. Are you angry with yourself and/or others?	1	4	0	

Domestic Violence and Abuse Questionnaire

Questions	Answers			Comments
16. Do you feel that the abuse was your fault?	0	5	0	#4, I knew better in the last relationship.
17. Have you forgiven your abuser?	5	0	0	
18. Do you choose to be alone as oppose to being around others?	1	4	0	#5. Since I started coming to church I was fine.
19. Have you ever used alcohol or narcotics to dull the pain?	1	4	0	
20. Did you ever have thoughts of suicide during or since your abuse?	1	4	0	
21. Have you ever received counseling for your domestic violence and abuse experience?	1	4	0	#1, Only God's counsel.

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM

Recording Consent Form

	Yes	No	Comments
I give my permission for this interview to be audio taped.	5	0	
My name will not be used but I will be assigned a code number.	5	0	
The tape will be destroyed upon completion of the project.	5	0	
The transcripts will be archived according to the guidelines set by United Theological Seminary.	5	0	
The information can be made public.	5	0	

APPENDIX C
SESSION EVALUATION FORM

Session Evaluation Form

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	Comments
	1	2	3	4	5	
1. Scriptures were relevant to my situation.					5	
					5	Women of the Street” To help them know that they are not alone, even church women go through it.
2. Facilitator allowed me to ask questions.					5	
						Teach us how to minister to others as well as help them get free and how to avoid abuse and signs of any and all forms of it.
3. Sharing my experience made me feel comfortable.					5	
4. Facilitator involved participant.					5	
5. Facilitator demonstrated knowledge of the subject.					5	
6. Session materials were helpful.					5	

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION

**United Theological Seminary
Informed Consent Form for Participation
Doctor of Ministry Program (2007)**

Project Title: Empowering Women to Rise Up: Ministry for the Aftereffects of Domestic Violence and Abuse

Researcher: Reverend Janice D. Blackmon

Mentors: Reverend Ivan Douglas Hicks, Ph.D., and Reverend Claude Alexander, D. Min.

THIS CONSENT FORM IS NECESSARY FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY. YOUR SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED AND INDICATES THAT YOU ARE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE. A COPY OF THIS FORM WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU.

Purpose of the Research: The purpose of this research is to develop a biblically based tool that can be used for ministry to empower women, who are experiencing the aftereffects of domestic violence and abuse.

Expected Duration and Description of the Project: This project consists of six sessions. In the first session you will be given a questionnaire to complete. During that same session, the investigator will take a tape recorded interview of you, based upon your responses to the questionnaire. In the next three sessions, you will be asked to participate in a focus group of five women, facilitated by the investigator. The focus group discussions will be based upon a specific topic and scripture. You will be asked to share what you are experiencing as a result of the domestic violence and abuse. In the last two sessions, you will view movies, listen to recordings, and do role plays. Also in the last session, you will be asked to complete another questionnaire and an evaluation form.

Reasonable Foreseeable Risks or Discomforts: Your experience of domestic violence and abuse may have occurred recently or years ago. This project will require you to revisit some experiences which may cause you to feel uncomfortable. This is the only foreseeable risk or discomfort.

Possible Benefits for Participation: Your participation in this project will allow you to give voice to your experience. The focus group discussions may allow you to see that others have experienced domestic violence and abuse. This project will provide a model which can be used by ministries and community groups to help women who are experiencing the aftereffects of domestic violence and abuse.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be protected. Throughout the project, you will be identified by a code number. Any data concerning you, such as consent forms, questionnaires, tape recordings and evaluation forms, will be stored in a secured file known only to the researcher and a grammarian (one who proof reads the writings) who is not associated with the context. The audio tapes will be destroyed at the end of the project. The transcripts will be securely stored and kept for future projects. Other writings may be done concerning this project. In that case, you will continue to be unidentifiable.

Contact Information: If you have any pertinent questions or concerns about your rights while participating in this project, please contact the investigator, Rev. Janice D. Blackmon at (313) 382-2801 or janice.blackmon@sbcglobal.net. The mailing address is 437 Palmerston Street River, Rouge, MI 48218.

Participation: Your participation in this project is strictly voluntary. You, _____, agree to participate as a volunteer in the project, Empowering Women to Arise and Walk Out of the Aftereffects of Domestic Violence and Abuse. Any refusal to participate at anytime during the project will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You are not being asked to give up any of your legal rights.

Completion: This project should be fully completed December 2007. If you would like to receive a copy of the results of this project, please provide your address, telephone number and an e-mail address.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Mailing Address

Telephone number

E-mail address

APPENDIX E
SESSION SAMPLES

**Empowering Women to Rise Up: Ministry for the Aftereffects of
Domestic Violence and Abuse
Session 1
Responsive Healing Litany**

- Leader:** O LORD, you brought us up from the grave; you spared us from going down into the pit. (Ps. 30:3 NIV)
- Response:** God wants to bring us out of the aftereffect of domestic violence into the healing we need. God wants to set us free.
- Leader:** You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry. (Ps. 10:17 NIV)
- Response:** For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. (Luke 12:2-3 NKJV) God wants to set us free.
- Leader:** Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people? (Jer. 8:22 NIV)
- All:** There is a balm in Gilead. I am healed. I am whole. God has set me free and whom the Son sets free is free indeed.

**Empowering Women to Rise Up: Ministry for the Aftereffects of
Domestic Violence and Abuse
Session 1
Overcoming Aftereffects**

- I. Introduction of the Facilitator and Group Members (15 minutes)
 - A. Prayer and Welcome
 - B. Purpose of the Group
 - 1. Distribute folders
 - 2. Discuss the purpose and contents of the folder
 - 3. Anonymity
 - C. Testimonials (2-3 sentence statements as to why you are here)
- II. Give the topic of today's session; Overcoming Aftereffects (30 minutes include 10 minute break)
 - A. Read Philippians 4:13, Romans 8:15, 2 Timothy 1:7 and John 8:32
 - B. 3 study questions pertain to overcoming aftereffects
 - 1. What things have I accomplished since my abuse?
 - 2. Is there any bondage in my life that pertains to or stems from my domestic violence and abuse experience?
 - 3. Am I crying out to God to release me from this bondage?
 - C. Silent Reflection
 - D. Break

**Empowering Women to Rise Up: Ministry for the Aftereffects of
Domestic Violence and Abuse
Session 1
Overcoming Aftereffects, *continued***

- III. Discussion of the 3 questions (1 hour)
 - A. Read a portion of the article, “If I Could Close My Eyes”¹
- IV. Closure (15 minutes)
 - A. Responsive Healing Litany
 - B. Completion of Evaluation Form
 - C. Prayer Request
 - D. Closing prayer

¹ Esman, Abigail R. “If I Could Close My Eyes, A story of love, pain, hope, and release. Diane, *The Curves Magazine*, Fall 2006, 34.

**Empowering Women to Arise and Walk Out of the Aftereffects of Domestic
Violence and Abuse**

Session 2

Discovering You by Trusting in God

- I. Introduction of the Facilitator and Group Members. (15 minutes).
 - A. Prayer and Welcome.
 - B. Purpose of the Group.
 1. Distribute folders.
 2. Discuss the purpose and contents of the folder.
 3. Anonymity.
 - C. Testimonials (2-3 sentence statements as to why you are here).
- II. Give the topic of today's session: Discovering You by Trusting in God. (30 minutes include 10 minute break).
 - A. Read Matthew 6:25-34, Psalm 55:22-23 and Mark 15:21-28.
 - B. Watch DVD of screen play²
 - C. 3 study questions pertain to discovering you by trusting in God.
 1. Do you trust God to handle the aftereffects of your domestic violence and abuse experience?
 2. Have any major changes occurred in your social life since you have been on your own? If so, what are they?
 3. Are you ready to enter into another relationship?

² Ted K. Sims, "Never Say Never," A Musical Gospel Stage Play T & G Productions 2007, DVD.

**Empowering Women to Arise and Walk Out of the Aftereffects of Domestic
Violence and Abuse
Session 2**

Discovering You by Trusting in God, *continued*

- D. Silent Reflection.
- E. Break.
- III. Discussion of the 3 questions and DVD. (1 hour).
 - A. Listen to a CD by Dianne Reeves, “Testify”³
- IV. Closure. (15 minutes).
 - A. Responsive Healing Litany.
 - B. Completion of Evaluation Form.
 - C. Prayer Request.
 - D. Closing prayer.

³Diane Reeves, “Testify” *In the Moment Live in Concert [Live]*, Blue Note Records 2000, compact disc.

**Empowering Women to Arise and Walk Out of the Aftereffects of
Domestic Violence and Abuse
Session 2
Responsive Healing Litany**

Leader: I will not worry about my life, because God supplies all of my needs.

Response: **My faith in God gives me strength when I need it most.**

Leader: My faith makes me strong when I feel weak inside.

Response: **I have the choice to make good decisions for me and my family. My faith in God gives me strength when I need it most.**

Leader: If I delight myself in God, the desires of my heart will be given to me.⁴

Response: **My heart, my mind and my soul belongs to God. My faith in God gives me strength when I need it most.**

All: **I am no longer a victim, I am a survivor. My faith in God gives me strength when I need it most.**

⁴ Psalm 37:3-6 NIV

**Empowering Women to Rise Up: Ministry for the Aftereffects of Domestic Violence
and Abuse
Final Session 3**

Sharing My Story

1. Introduction of the Facilitator and Group Members. (5 minutes)
 - A. Prayer and Welcome
 1. Distribute folders
 2. Discuss the contents of the folder
 3. Anonymity
- II. Give the topic of today's session: Sharing My Story (1 Hour and 30 minutes)
 - A. Listen to Cassette Recording of ABC's Diane Sawyer⁵
- IV. Closure (25 minutes)
 - A. Reaction
 1. Testimonials
 2. Responsive Healing Litany
 - B. Completion of Evaluation Forms
 - C. Closing Prayer

⁵ Susan Still, "Domestic Violence Interview," interview by Diane Sawyer, 20/20 Television (October 27, 2006).

**Empowering Women to Rise Up: Ministry for the Aftereffects of
Domestic Violence and Abuse
Final Session**

Sharing My Story

- Leader:** Faith in God helps to ease the pain that a believer faces.
- Response:** **My faith is strengthened when I hear a sister share her story.**
- Leader:** Sharing the pain and the hope sometimes will lift the burden.⁶
- Response:** **My strength is renewed when I hear a sister share her story.**
- Leader:** Listening to someone else's story may restore your faith in God.
- Response:** **Sharing my story and knowing that I am heard renews my strength day by day.**
- Leader:** When you share your testimony healing can begin.
- Response:** **As I heal, I will be able to share my story so that I can help others.**
- All:** **Sharing my story and knowing that I am heard renews my strength day by day. Because I have waited on the Lord, I will soar on wings like eagles. I will run and not grow weary. I will walk and not faint!**⁷

⁶ Nancy Nason-Clark and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *Refuge from Abuse, Healing and Hope for Abused Christian Women* (Inter Varsity Press, 2004). 145.

⁷ Isaiah 40:31, NIV

**Empowering Women to Rise Up: Ministry for the Aftereffects of Domestic Violence
and Abuse**

Statement of Anonymity

I _____, do hereby promise that the conversations we have
Print Your Full Name
during these peer sessions will be held in the strictest of confidence. I agree that
everything that will be discussed during our peer sessions will remain within the confines
of our group sessions. I agree to hold the information provided during the peer sessions in
strict confidence.

Print Your Name

Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Project Title: Empowering Women to Rise Up: Ministry for the Aftereffects of Domestic Violence

Researcher: Reverend Janice D. Blackmon

Mentors: Reverend Ivan Douglas Hicks, Ph.D., and Reverend Claude Alexander, D.Min.

This questionnaire will be used to help the researcher obtain additional knowledge about your domestic violence and abuse experience after your participation in the project. A response to each question is required as follows: YES, NO, or SOMETIMES. You are asked to provide an explanation for questions 9 and 10. Please circle your responses. If you have any questions about this document please ask the researcher. When you are finished, please return the questionnaire to the researcher. Your identity will be kept in strict confidence and be protected. You will be assigned a code number which will be placed on this document. The questionnaire will be stored by the researcher.

1. Would you recommend this ministry to your family and friends?

YES NO SOMETIMES

2. Would you participate in a ministry to help victims or survivors of domestic violence?

YES NO SOMETIMES

3. Would you be interested in learning how to facilitate this ministry?

YES NO SOMETIMES

4. Are you able to talk with your abuser about the domestic violence?

YES NO SOMETIMES

5. Can you talk with your children about your domestic violence experience?

YES NO SOMETIMES

6. Do you feel that you are ready for another relationship?

YES NO SOMETIMES

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Domestic Violence and Abuse Exit Questionnaire, *continued*

7. Are you currently in a relationship?
- YES NO SOMETIMES
8. If you are in a relationship, do you make decisions concerning the relationship?
- YES NO SOMETIMES
9. Are you happy with you? Explain.
- YES NO SOMETIMES
10. Are you more aware of your feelings when involved with decision making with your children and others? Explain.
- YES NO SOMETIMES

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